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April '97

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WORLD PERCUSSION & HAND DRUMMING SUPPLEMENT PAGE 120

Steve Smith

CHICK COREA'S

Gary Novak

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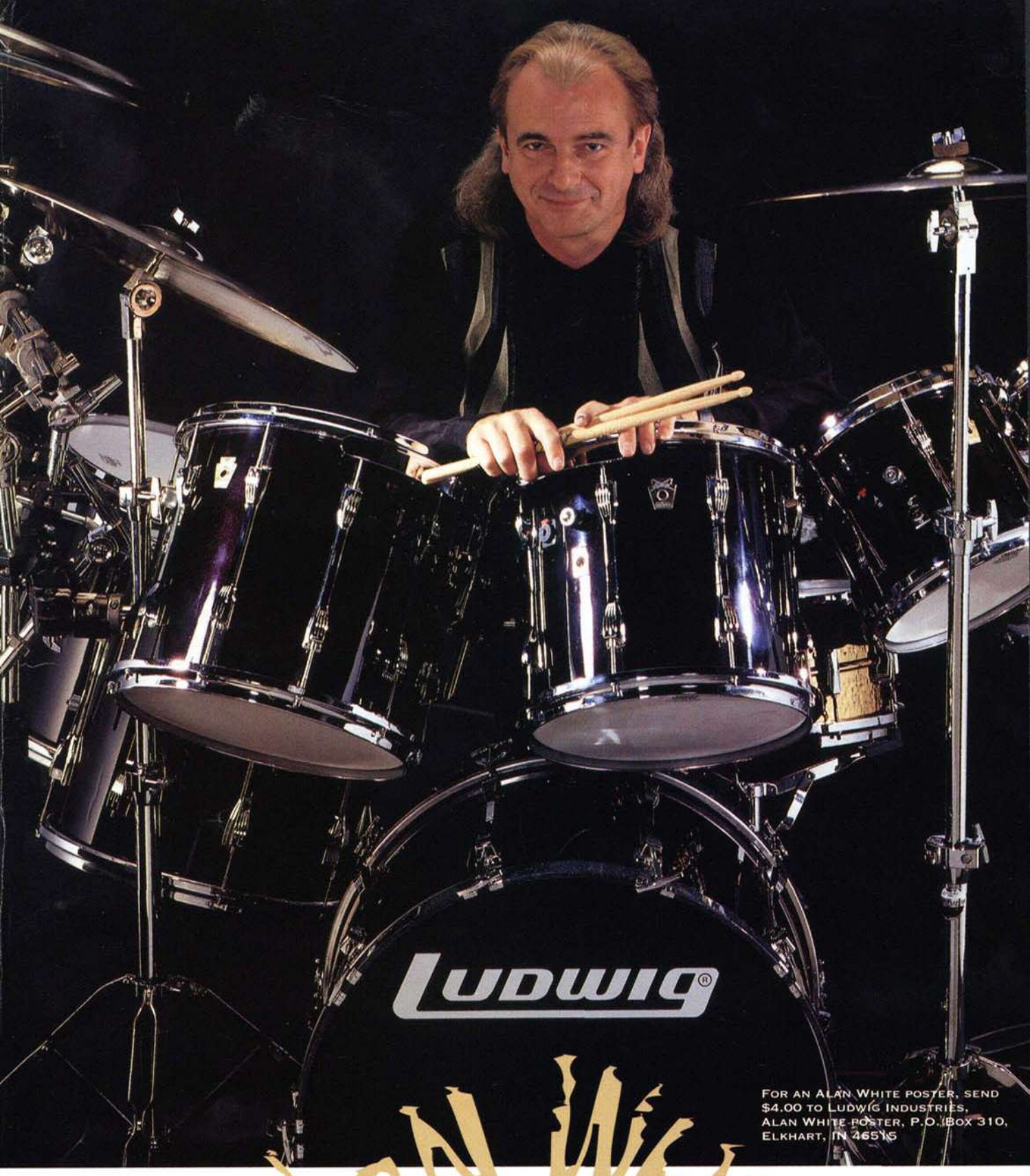

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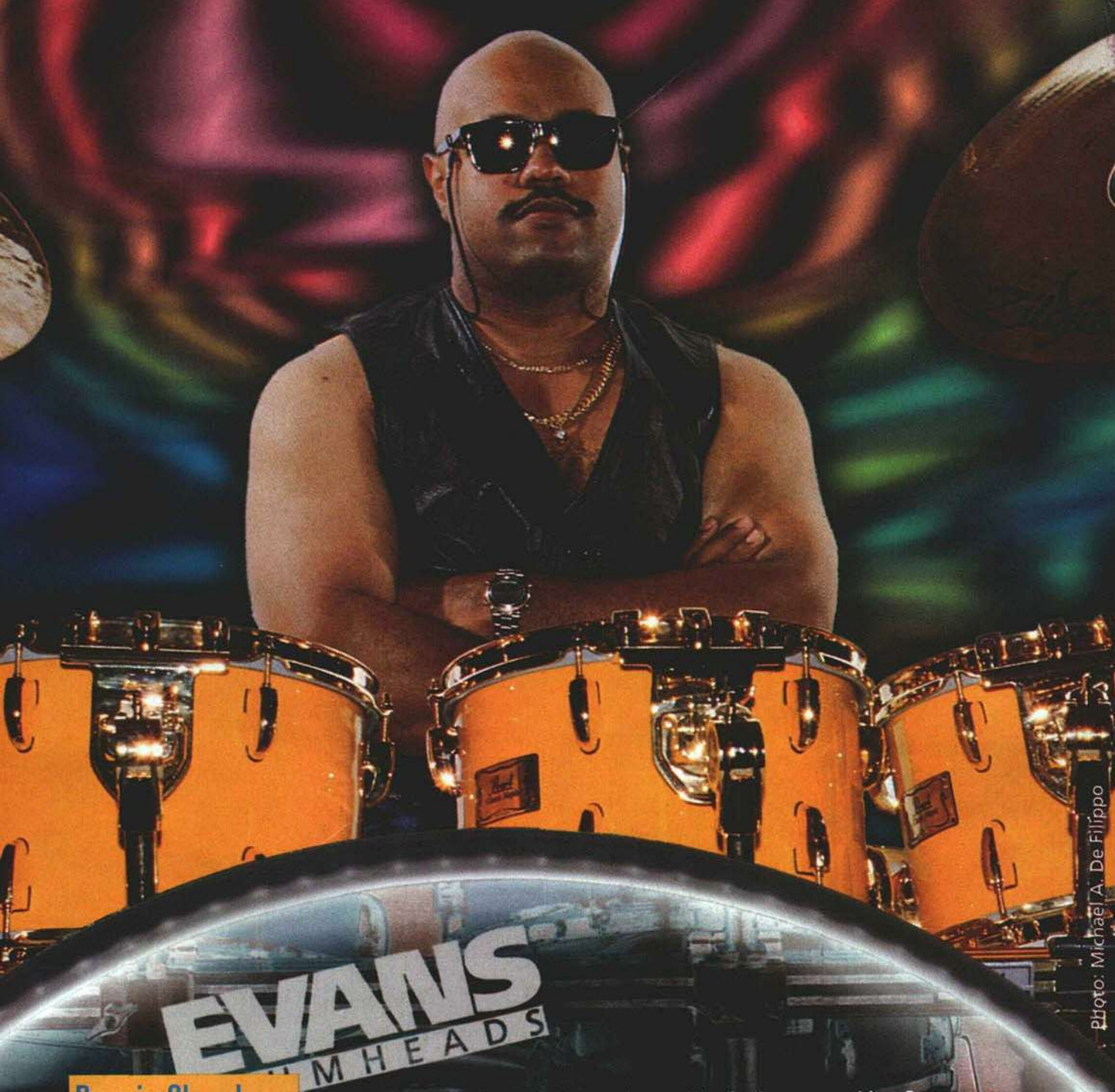

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Dennis Chambers is a virtual chameleon in the music world, playing everything from rock to jazz to funk with the likes of John McLaughlin, Steely Dan, John Scofield, and the P-Funk All-Stars. He relies on the sound and versatility of Evans G2 batter heads, Genera Resonants, an ST Dry snare head, and the EQ3 Bass Drum System, because unlike other chameleons, Dennis likes to stand out.

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Drummers have always viewed the world as an endless supply of things to bang, shake, tap, scrape, and crash on. But these days, what was once an interest in percussion instruments and techniques from around the world has clearly become an *obsession.* This month, in the first major Modern Drummer Supplement, we'll explore several important angles of this vital topic.

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We've got cymbals!
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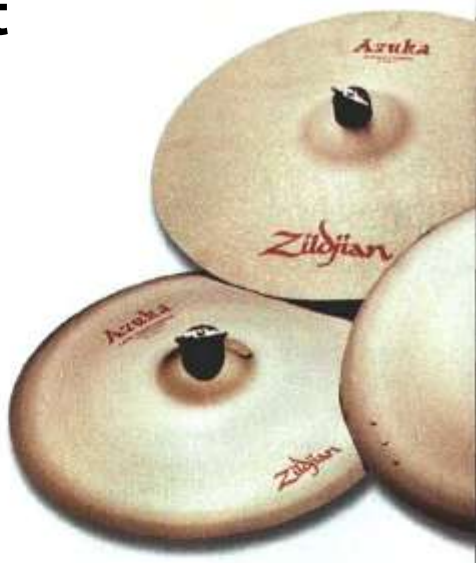

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A Special Supplement

This issue of *MD* includes the first in a planned series of special Supplements dealing with a specific area of drums and percussion. This month's Supplement is on world percussion and hand drumming, and we're hoping it will answer the many requests we've had to do more on the subject.

The information in the Supplement is divided into five sections, the first of which examines hand drumming and the drumset player. To get a better perspective on how and why hand drumming has played a role in their drumset performance, Rick Mattingly spoke with Neil Peart, Stephen Perkins, Terry Bozzio, and several others. His findings prove informative and revealing.

Next, we called on hand drumming expert John Bergamo. John is a leading authority on world percussion, and his insight should prove helpful for anyone wishing to get more involved in this specialized area. You'll also find our Hand Drummer's Resource Guide, which offers a listing of some of the world's leading hand drummers—including a compilation of books, recordings, and videos they've produced—so that you can easily gather more in-depth information.

Next up is our World Percussion New Products Guide, detailing the features, benefits, and prices of some of the finest hand drumming products on the market. And last but not least is a percussion instrument Glossary to help you better understand the usage and appreciate the rich history of these fascinating instruments.

It's no secret that hand drumming has become a strong force in the percussion world today. More and more players at all levels are adding these unique instruments to their kits, while a number of industry manufacturers continue to produce products that answer the demand.

Again, this month's Supplement is the first in a planned series, with several others now on the drawing board. We'd very much like to hear your thoughts on what we've done here, along with what you might like to see us cover in future Supplements. Feel free to drop us a line anytime.

Ron Spagnardi

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HAYNES AND NASH

Your cover story on Lewis Nash and Roy Haynes [January '97 *MD]* was incredible. As one of Lewis's students, I am always inspired by his meaningful words, as well as by his fluidity on the drumset. Thanks, also, for the great article summing up the DCI finals in Orlando. Your efforts are appreciated.

Ian Essling
via Internet

FLEXING IN THE GROOVE

I was very happy to read the article on the importance of drummers staying in good physical shape in your January issue ["Flexing In The Groove"]. I was very involved with drumming and weights and body conditioning back in 1960, and I even published several books on the subject. I'm going on seventy-seven years old, and I still lift weights. I feel that because I've stayed with a body conditioning program, I'm still able to teach and to perform three or more nights a week. Hats off to you guys at *MD* for a very important article.

Sam Ulano
New York, NY

You folks at *MD* are always on the ball. "Flexing In The Groove" by Mark Scholl in your January issue was very well done. Drumming is a very physical activity, and pumping up can make playing those really long songs and moving all our equipment a lot easier. I've been drumming for the past five years and working out for the past year. Moving that 22" bass drum now seems a bit less strenuous. I just wanted to drop a line to let you know that every year your magazine gets better.

Mark Sanders
Akron, OH

JAY SCHELLEN

I was extremely pleased with your January '97 article on Jay Schellen. It's gratifying to know that *Modern Drummer* is dedicated to supporting drummers like Jay, whose philosophies and achievements are inspiring to all drummers.

One note of clarification: To obtain a copy of Jay's *Rocking Independence* through our company, a reader must dial (800) 408-8618 (as printed in the article), but must add the extension 4027 to get into the ordering system for this publication.

Mark J. Ostrowski
Vice President, Marketing—Paragon Press
Milford, CT

I just finished Jay Schellen's interview, and I was very pleased to see that he mentioned our little drumshop by name. Unfortunately, that name was misspelled as Luckette Drum and Guitar. It would mean a lot to us if you could print our correct name: Luchetti Music, Inc.

Thomas Mitchell, Manager
Albuquerque, NM

TO HARRY, FROM RON

In regards to Harry Cangany's response [January '96 *Readers' Platform*] to my article, "Bringing Your Vintage Set Into The '90s" [October '96 *MD*]: There is a lot of talk in the vintage drum world about "players" (drums used on gigs) versus "collectibles" (drums that are essentially museum pieces). I was coming from a "player" standpoint in my article.

I appreciate Harry's position that vintage instruments can only retain their true historic value if they are left in their original state. And I agree with him about the atrocities of drilling holes in shells or otherwise defacing them. However, I feel that if a drummer is going to *play* a drum (as opposed to putting it on display), the kind of alteration I talked about in the article may sometimes be the only way to get the drum up to par. Bearing-edge or snare-bed work is not an alteration that really defaces a drum, as far as I'm concerned. It simply makes that drum a better-performing instrument.

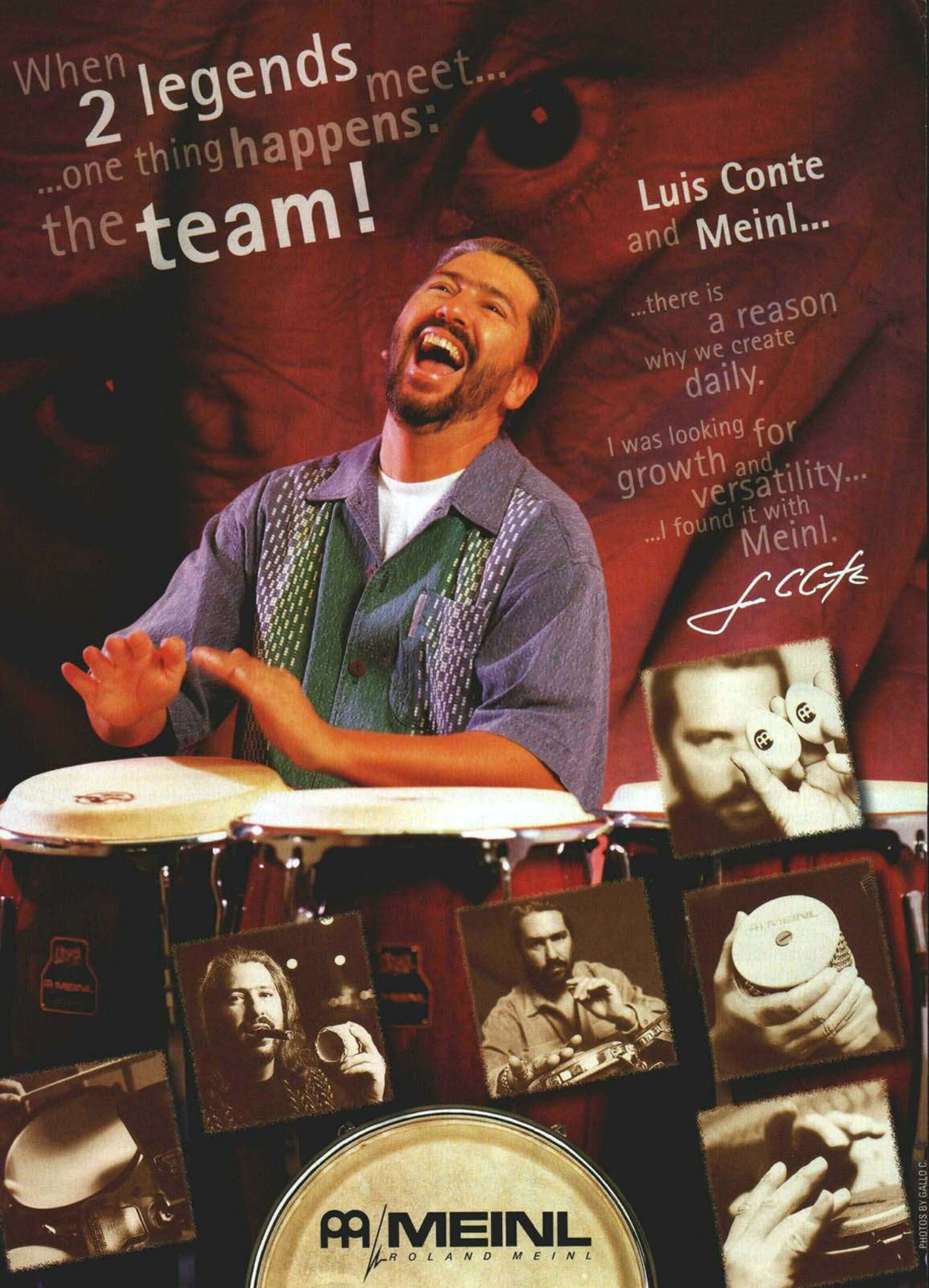
I certainly recognize Harry as our premier drum historian. But I think he and I have a philosophical difference based on the difference between "collectors" and "performers." Like most drummers, I can't afford to have a large collection of vintage drums. When I buy a drum—vintage or otherwise—I'm going to use it on my gigs. I don't think professional bearing-edge modification—which can only make a drum perform better—falls into the same category as drilling holes or other such aberrations.

Ron Hefner
Fort Myers, FL

GOALS PROGRAM CLARIFICATION

Your December 1996 edition contained a brief article that mentioned the Sabian company's involvement in "sponsoring" the Disney GOALS program. To clarify the involvement of Sabian, they were supportive of two of our neighborhood "hockey classes" in August of 1996 (we host over 200 each year) by providing a number of handouts, T-shirts, buttons, stickers, and drumstick pens. These items were distributed to approximately 100 of our 300 enrolled youngsters who are involved with our after-school youth development program in the Anaheim, California area.

Our program provides youth, ages six to nineteen, with ice rink time, roller hockey rink time, equipment, transportation, insurance, coaching, teaching, tutoring, job training, and community service opportunities—all at no cost. One of our program volunteers, Mr. Howard Brodwin, plays drums as a hobby, and he appeared at two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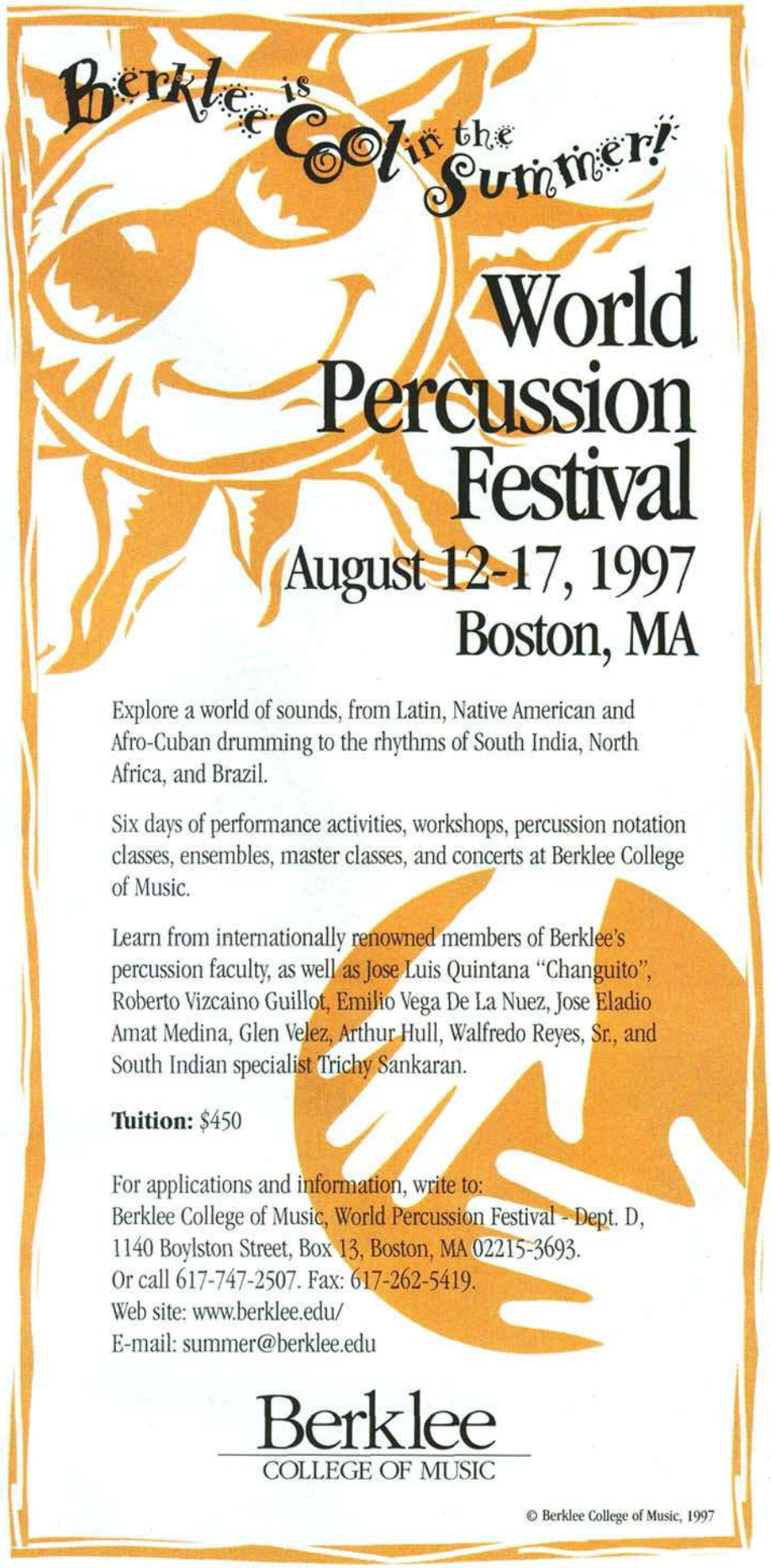

of our class sessions as part of our month-long focus on "music in hockey." His presentation was excellent and was well-received by our youngsters. We appreciated the support of Sabian with their donation of the various promotional items for his appearances. But we also wanted to explain the nature of our program and the context of Sabian's support during our "Music In Hockey" month.

Dave Wilk
Executive Director—Disney GOALS
(Growth Opportunities through Athletics, Learning, and Services)
Anaheim, CA

JOHN PANOZZO IN MEMORUM

I was saddened to read of the death of Styx drummer John Panozzo in your December '96 *Industry Happenings.* His rock-solid time will be missed. I have always had a soft spot for his work, since the picture shown in your "In Memoriam" piece was also on the cover of the first *Modern Drummer* I purchased, back in 1982!

Dave Pelletier
Brandon, Manitoba, Canada

John Panozzo will be sorely missed. His playing style is one of many that I've tried to employ in my drumming, and his ability to excite as well as to calm songs was one of the key reasons that Styx's music was so popular. I thank John for his inspirational musicianship. (I also applaud Todd Sucherman, who has proved a very impressive and talented replacement.)

Jeff Hurlbut
(no address given)

IN SUPPORT OF NEIL

To those of you who have been "coming down" on Neil Peart for not answering your letters or signing your tour book after a show, I have some words for you. I just watched *A Work In Progress.* Neil has given us yet another valuable resource. The videos are perfect for the beginner to the pro. The beginner can find challenging beats to work on. Many of the rhythms found on *Test For Echo* are played and explained in a very simple manner. The

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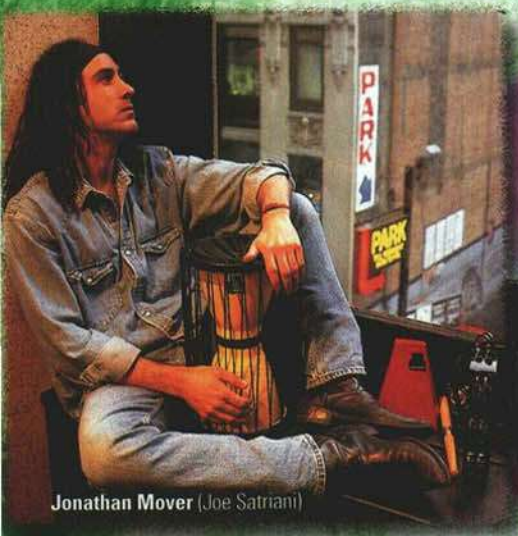
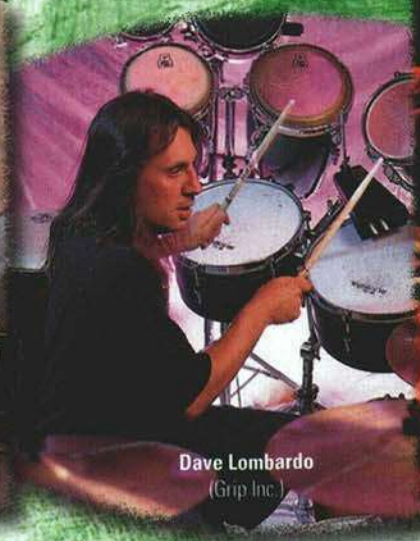


Jonathan Mover (Joe Satriani)



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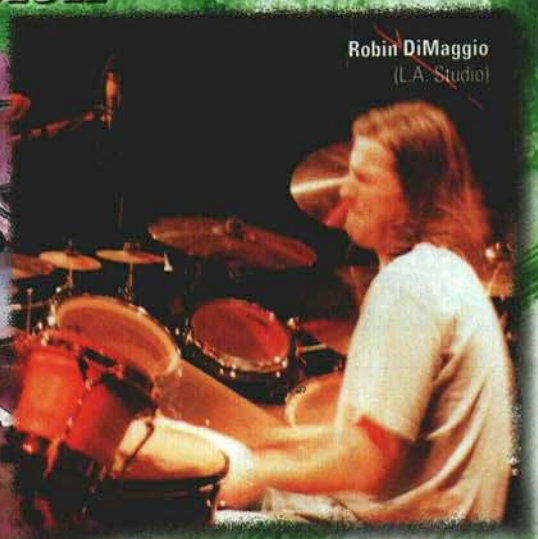

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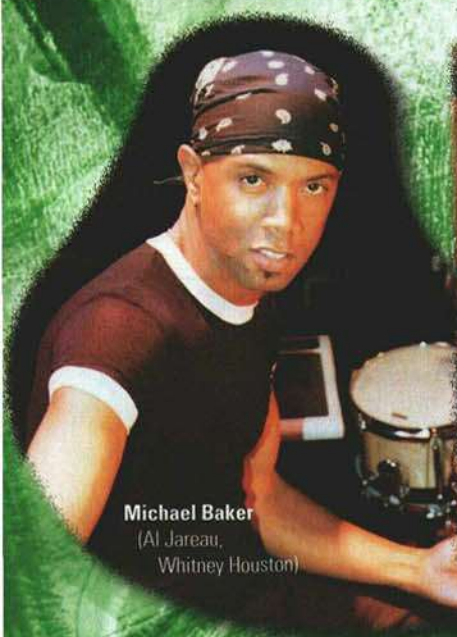
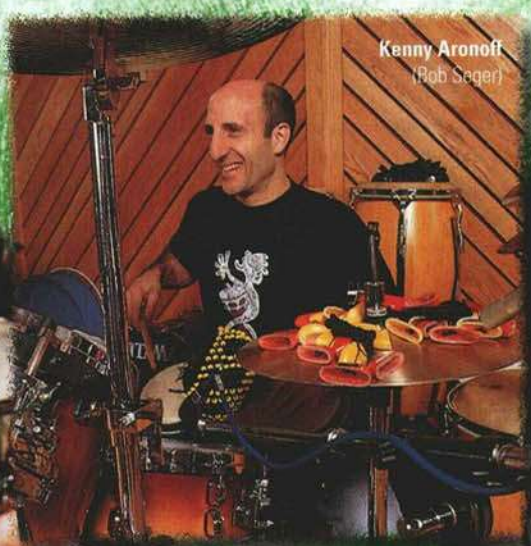
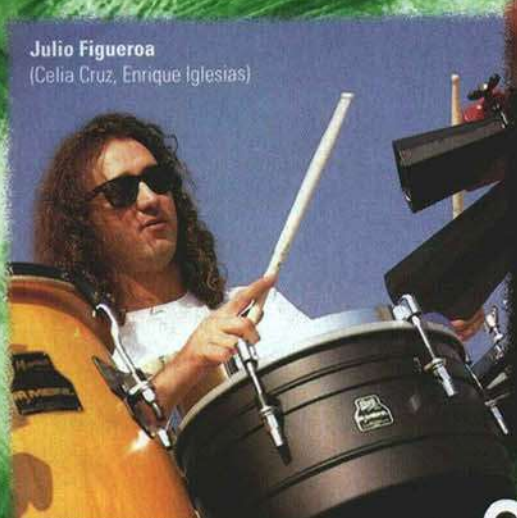


Michael Baker
(Al Jareau,
Whitney Houston)

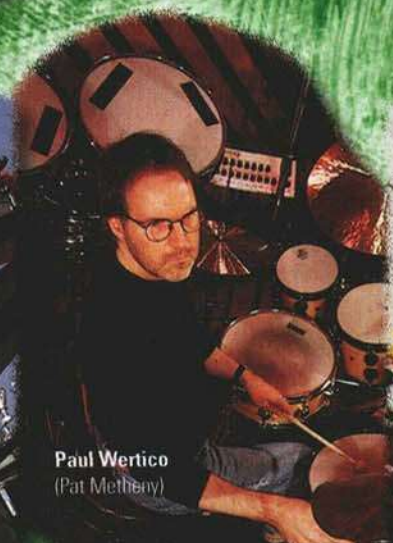


Kenny Aronoff
(Bob Seger)

Shannon Larkin
(Ugly Kid Joe)



Julio Figueroa
(Celia Cruz, Enrique Iglesias)



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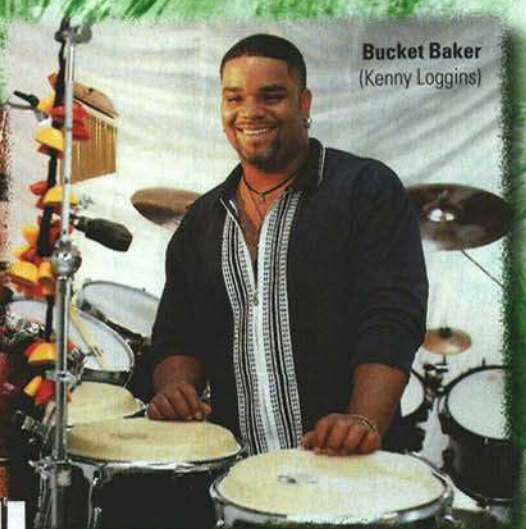
(Pat Metheny)



Bucket Baker
(Kenny Loggins)

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beats are also written out in a booklet. The more advanced player can listen to Neil's philosophy about playing the drums. His approach, experience, and understanding of the instrument create an excellent learning platform. He also talks in great length about his study with Freddie Gruber. Neil's words are about as close as any of us will get to studying with Freddie, so be wise and listen.

Many might think that these videos are "another way for Neil to make some bucks." I feel confident in saying I don't think he needs any more money. These videos are generated from pure love for music. I want to thank DCI for making them happen. I also want to congratulate Neil, audio engineer Clif Norrell, and everyone else involved in the project on a wonderful job!

I don't have a problem with Neil not wanting to sign his name after playing a nearly three-hour show. He is beyond that. We should all feel lucky that he is willing to share his passion and knowledge. But if you crybabies out there still want Neil's autograph, you can have mine (if I ever get one). I'll take *A Work In Progress, Burning For Buddy,* and the Rush CD/video collection. Long live the king!

Tommy Maras
Malibu, CA

THANKS FROM SKIP

I'd like to thank you for your generous support for me and the entire Master Class series at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Nashville this past November 20-23. Through your efforts (and those of my sponsors: Berklee College of Music, Yamaha drums, Zildjian cymbals, and Vic Firth) I was able to be a part of this great event. My thanks also to Ed Soph and Rick Mattingly of the Percussive Arts Society, and Bill Miller of your publication, who made my presentation possible and helped to make it an enjoyable experience.

Skip Hadden
Gloucester, MA

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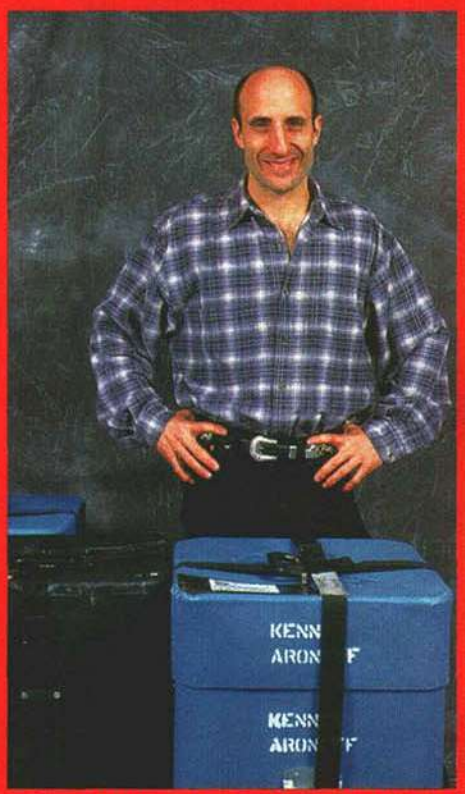
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SCREAMING TREES' BARRETT MARTIN

Exposing The World Percussion Roots

Like many of his Seattle peers, Screaming Trees drummer Barrett Martin is a fan of John Bonham ("Who isn't?" he asks) Martin's playing on the Trees' 1992 gold album, *Sweet Oblivion,* as well as his work with Pearl Jam's Mike McCready and Alice In Chains' Layne Staley in the Seattle supergroup Mad Season, recalls Bonham at his most thunderous But there's another, much more subtle side to Martin's talents

Raised in the small town on Tumwater, Washington, Martin grew up in a musical family and spent a few years in college studying upright jazz bass before being diverted by grunge Now, at the ripe old age of thirty, he says he's moving "more and more out of the rock 'n' roll realm" His interests in ethnic percussion can be heard in the finely textured djembe and tabla parts on the Trees' latest album, the superbly psychedelic *Dust,* and Epic Records will release the self-titled debut by his instrumental jazz/worldtbeat side project, Tuatara, in late February

Named after a lizard considered sacred by New Zealand natives and originally formed with the hope of recording soundtracks, Tuatara boast an impressive lineup—R E M 's Peter Buck, Justin Harwood of Luna, and Steve Berlin of Los Lobos—but Martin is the leader and visionary. He proudly lists the instruments he played on the album, including drumset, steel drums. African bass marimba, regular marimba, vibes, various hand drums, Burmese temple gongs, Chinese gongs, and tabla "I spent all my money on instruments, but it's a good return, because now I can make records like I want to make," he says, laughing

"Live, we do this thing where everybody is kind of on their core instrument, and then we do a switch where everybody trades instruments without losing a beat" Martin adds, "We hired another drummer, Mike Stone, a jazz player from town, to play drumset on stage so that I can play vibes, marimba, and hand drums I certainly don't want to be a front man But in this group, I'm sort of like the bandleader. I'm calling out the changes, and I'm calling out the melodies"

Now Screaming Trees is on tour and the members' spirits are up. but Martin jokes, "Tuatara is really my main interest, and the Trees are like the day job'

Jim DeRogatis

TODD SUCHERMAN

PICKING UP STYX

"There was a moment in rehearsals when I looked at the monitor board and saw my name written for vocal mic's alongside everyone else's names, and it wasn't written any smaller. That was when it hit me that this is *really* happening." Todd Sucherman is describing the moment he fully realized that he was actually playing with Styx, a band he had listened to a lot while growing up in Chicago. The drummer played on the most recent Styx album, *Greatest Hits II,* and joined the band on their *Return To Paradise* tour last summer.

Rick Malkin

Sucherman, who is twenty-seven, came to Styx with impressive credentials and heritage: His father was a prominent Chicago big band drummer who played with Lena Horne, Sammy Davis, Jr., Sophie Tucker, and others. "When I was an infant I was drawn to the drums," Todd says. "My father saw that I had an interest and started me when I was two."

Continuing his love for the instrument, Sucherman eventually took his formal study of music to Berklee College of Music. He then returned to Chicago, establishing himself as a sought-after studio musician. Since then he has recorded with a number of top artists, including Billy Ocean, Peter Cetera, Bob Mamet, and Survivor.

In 1993 Sucherman started his own band, the Falling Wallendas. The group released its first album last year on IMI Records and is now working on a second. According to Sucherman, "I enjoy the freelance nature of session work, but I also find playing in a band to be rewarding." Todd adds that he hopes to continue working with Styx in the future.

Harriet L. Schwartz

ZZ FRANK BEARD TOP

After recording "She's Just Killing Me" and "Vincent Price Blues" for Quentin Tarantino's film *From Dusk Till Dawn,* ZZ Top decided they enjoyed having had to finish the tunes quickly. "We had to do it in a three-day period," explains Frank Beard, "and the only way we knew how to write and record in three days was to get in there and do it live."

They had so much fun working that way that they decided to cut their latest CD, *Rhythmeen,* with the same approach. "It was good going in there and playing," he says. "We weren't looking for perfect tracks; we were looking for tracks that felt good. We did very little overdubbing, so when the track would be going down, I would know what the lead was going to be right there and could play along with it, instead of having to guess what it was going to be."

Beard says he also simplified his kit for the accompanying tour. "It just felt right. We started out with this intimate **ZZ** Top feel; we're not using a big production, we're not using the **ZZ** Girls—it's refocusing on the music. I'm on a little riser near the band, and it's exciting. Instead of sitting up there lordly above a giant production and watching everything go on, I feel more like I'm down in the trenches, fighting it out."

Robyn Flans

Russell Simins: The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion

Black suits and narrow ties they ain't. Jake and Elwood they're not. Robert Johnson run and hide, because the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion is coming. Make no mistake, if the blues is hiding in this ruckus, it's trying to get out!

Currently, the guitar-drums outfit (they are without bass) is hotter than a pistol in the NY underground and beyond. Even *Rolling Stone* is paying lip service to the irreverent punky trio. Center stage, Russell Simins is giving it all on a basic Slingerland kit: bass drum, snare, floor tom, and ride cymbal.

Russell's instrument saw action long before the Explosion. His parents secured the drumset from Long Island tutor Al Miller when Russell was seven: "It was actually a spare Buddy Rich kit, a 1962 Slingerland with a very rare finish; it's the only drumset I've ever owned." Why no rack tom or crash cymbals? "There just came a time when I was more into grooving drums; I can fill without the extra tom. If you listen to Al Jackson from Stax, or Ziggy Modeliste, the main thing is the groove. Also, I heard that Al Jackson didn't use many cymbals because it turned the chicks off!"

What goes around comes around. Soul legend Rufus Thomas guests on a track off the new CD, *Now I Got Worry.* On a whim, while recording in Memphis they phoned Rufus, and a half hour later there he was, swigging a bottle of *Scope.* ("Well, I don't want to *offend* anybody!") Rufus survived a run-through of the jittery "Chicken Dog" and then hung around and told stories.

You wouldn't catch it at first glance, but Memphis says it all for Russell: "The way that stuff is produced, it doesn't have a lot of artifice. It's undeniably basic and simple." Ditto for the Blues Explosion: "We're not really into studio trickery as much as we are into recording live. Blues-based, funk-based, punk-based—we strip things down to a level where you can understand what our influences are. We're not hiding behind fat walls of production."

T. Bruce Wittet

Terence Higgins

That New Orleans Thang

Just over two years ago, Terence Higgins sat down and checked all his options. At first it was relatively simple: He could continue to play with New Orleans legend George Porter or he could join folk iconoclast Michelle Shocked, who was looking to get into the New Orleans vibe. But then, at the last minute, the hammer came down and it was the cats from the Dirty Dozen, the band formerly know as the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, who sent him an offer. Sure he was getting bucket-loads of experience with Porter, and Shocked offered him a great time, but it was the Dirty Dozen who had the right combination of national exposure, financial gain, and tremendous music. "I'm having a ball!" Higgins says from his home in New Orleans. "I've been with this band two years now and I'm still getting comfortable with playing some of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band stuff."

For the record, when Higgins walked through the door, he was taking the place of *two* drummers, who had set down the vibe of the band from day one. "I have to incorporate some of that two-drummer thing, the bass drum and the snare drum," he explains. "I tend to have my own interpretation of it, which is a little bit more busy on the bass drum and ride cymbals, as opposed to just snare drum and bass. Also, I add the hi-hat on the upbeat. I've been having fun experimenting with the different syncopation of that drumming. It's been great and I'm finally getting it," he says with a laugh.

To date the new incarnation of the Dirty Dozen has one studio album under their belt, *Ears To The Wall* (on which Higgins grooves hard), and countless live gigs, where it all comes together for the drummer. "I prefer the live gigs, 'cause live is really raw and the energy is ten times greater. I look at each gig as a stepping stone, and right now I'm in the best situation, musically. So I'm gonna milk it and take it where it leads me."

David John Farinella

NEWS

Chad Smith is currently recording a new Chili Peppers LP

Hilary Jones is on Eric Marienthal's new album.

Tris Imboden recently recorded with Kenny Loggins, as well as with Chicago, who plan to begin touring in March.

Carmine Appice is working on a thirtieth-anniversary reunion album and tour with Vanilla Fudge.

Eric Singer is on an upcoming Queen tribute album. He is also on the solo release from former Ratt frontman Warren D. Martini.

Stephen Perkins has been dabbling with a solo project, an instrumental band titled Banyan, since Porno For Pyros have postponed their tour.

John Tempesta is on White Zombie's contribution to the *Beavis And Butt-Head Do America* soundtrack, on a song called "Ratfinks, Suicide Tanks, and Cannibal Girls."

Matt Sorum is working on the next Guns N' Roses album.

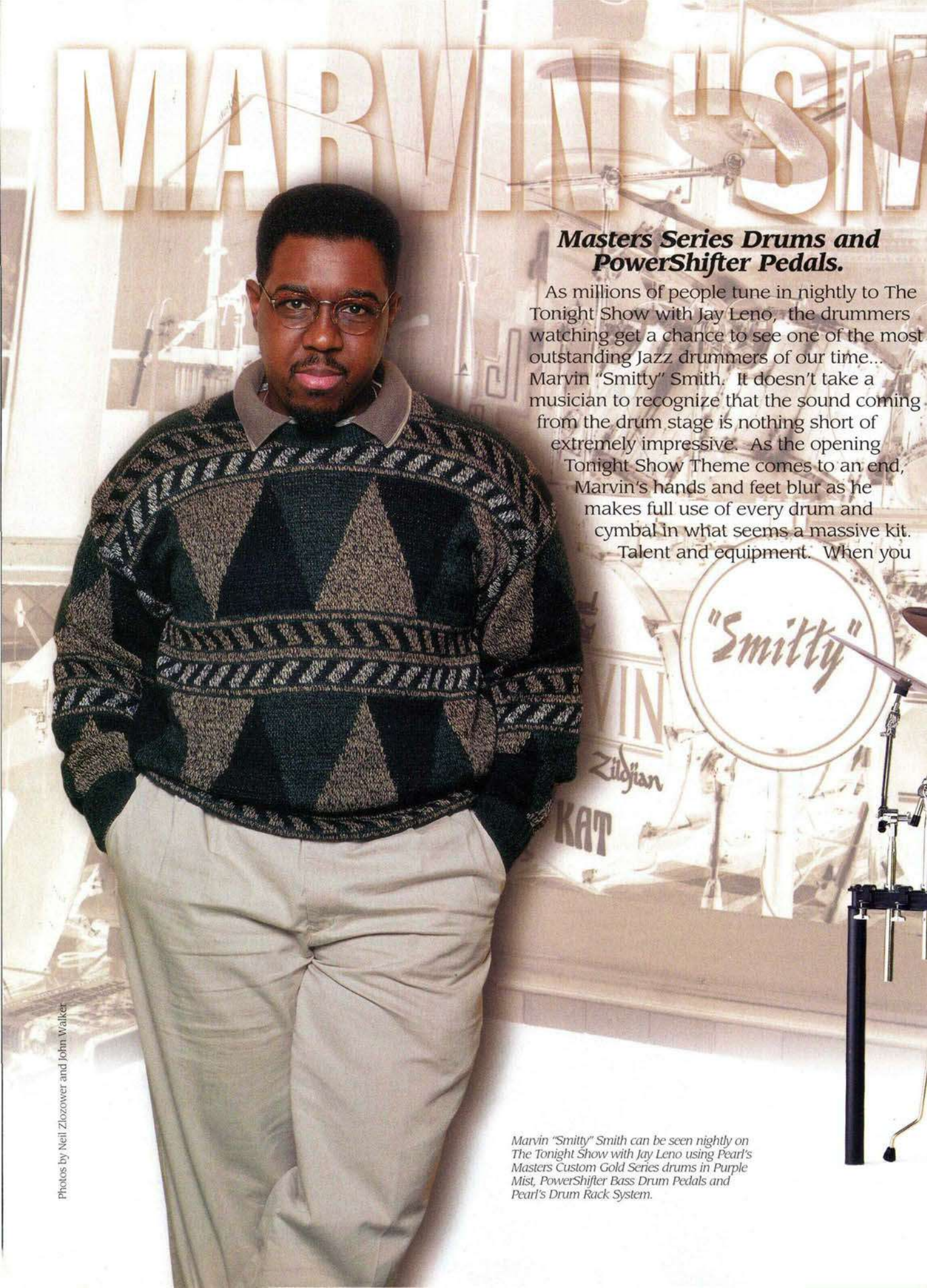
James Bradley, Jr. performed with Slash on his Blues Ball tour.

Ron Welty is on the recently released Offspring album, *Ixnay On The Hombre.*

Dan Thompson is on Protein's debut, *Ever Since I Was A Kid.*

News **Correction:**
MD's January *Update News* listed Scott Capizzano as the drummer for Reverend Horton Heat. **Scott Churilla** is with Horton Heat, and **Scott Capizzano** is with the band Reacharound. Our apologies for the mix-up.

MARVIN "SM



Masters Series Drums and PowerShifter Pedals.

As millions of people tune in nightly to The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, the drummers watching get a chance to see one of the most outstanding Jazz drummers of our time... Marvin "Smitty" Smith. It doesn't take a musician to recognize that the sound coming from the drum stage is nothing short of extremely impressive. As the opening Tonight Show Theme comes to an end, Marvin's hands and feet blur as he makes full use of every drum and cymbal in what seems a massive kit. Talent and equipment. When you

Marvin "Smitty" Smith can be seen nightly on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno using Pearl's Masters Custom Gold Series drums in Purple Mist, PowerShifter Bass Drum Pedals and Pearl's Drum Rack System.

Photos by Neil Zlozower and John Walker

SMITH

boil it all down, cut through all the hype, the keys to success seem this simple. With "Smitty", there's an abundance of talent. With Masters Series drums and PowerShifter pedals, you have the same exact tools that so many professional drummers base their careers upon.

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The next time you get to see a great player like "Smitty" perform, maybe the terms talent and equipment might come to mind.

Masters Series drums. The equipment of choice for some of the most talented drummers of our time.

Pearl

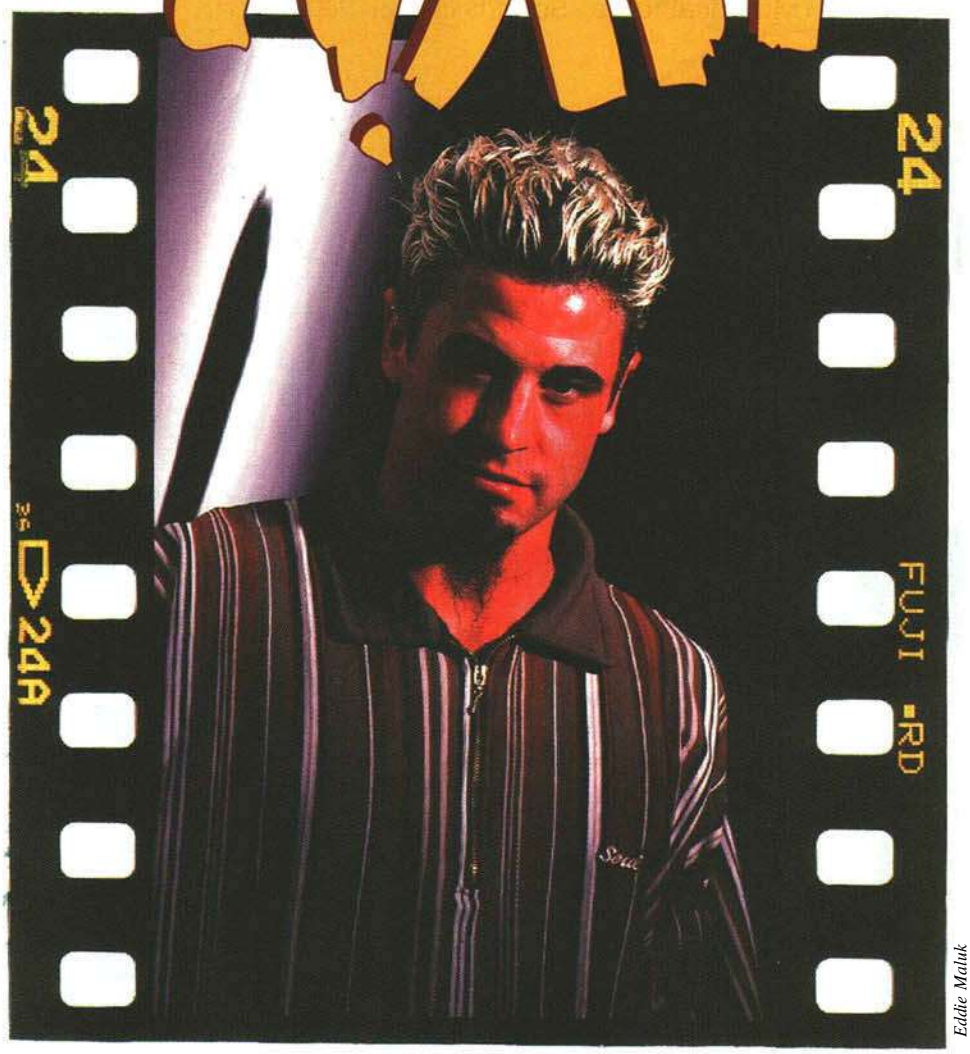
David Silveria of Korn

by Matt Peiken

Anyone who's ever passed through Bakersfield, California has quickly learned three things about the town: It's homely, it's hellishly hot, and it's not necessarily a place you'd want to vacation. But according to Korn drummer David Silveria, that "freeway view" keeps people from discovering the town's hidden treasures. "I think one of the reasons music became such an obsession for everyone in the band, "says David, "is that there just wasn't a whole lot to do where we lived. But you have to come from somewhere, and we made good with what we had. We didn't let Bakersfield be an excuse."

Any excuses went out the window when Silveria and two bandmates moved to Los Angeles—well before the formation of Korn. Under the name LAPD, they plied the pay-to-play circuit and released an album before finding a new singer—in, of all places, Bakersfield. Korn was born, and the band soon saw itself at the heart of a hip-hop/headbanging hybrid that attracts legions of fans without the benefit of extensive radio or video support.

On Korn's second album, Life Is Peachy, *the twenty-four-year-old Silveria blends the high-toned, staccato style of Tim Alexander with the militaristic bent of Ted Parsons. In this interview, Silveria discusses the making of Korn's new album, his natural evolution as a drummer, and how five musicians happened to find each other in a metropolitan California desert.*

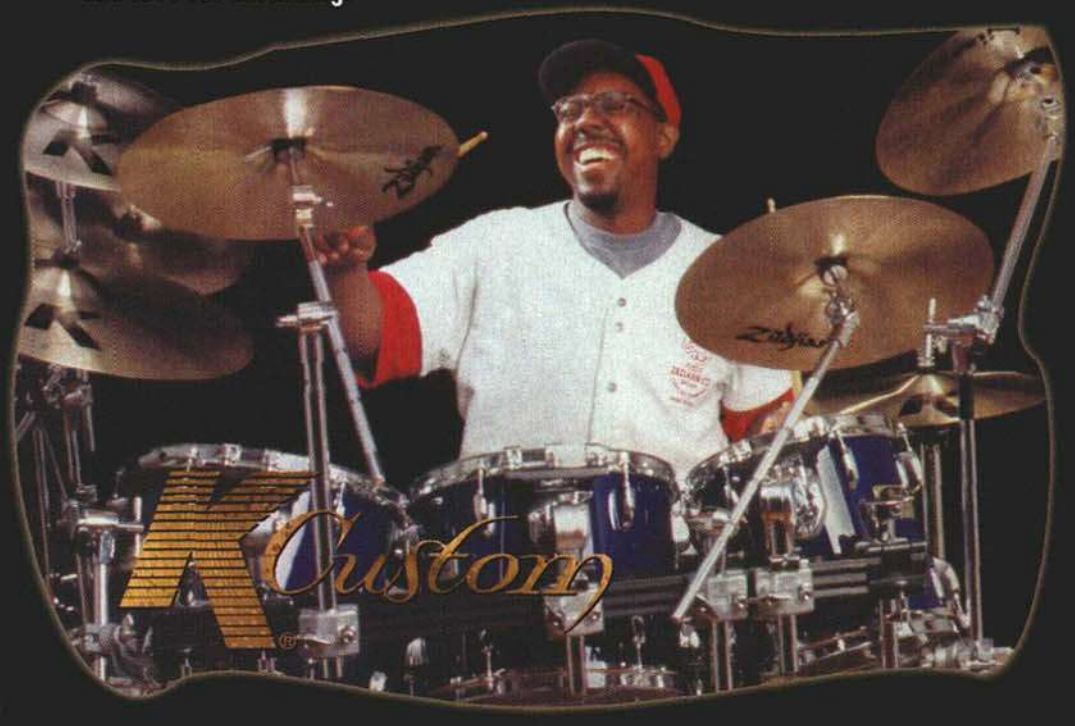


Eddie Maluk

"Smitty is always pushing the envelope. And he does it with intense passion and a love for drumming."

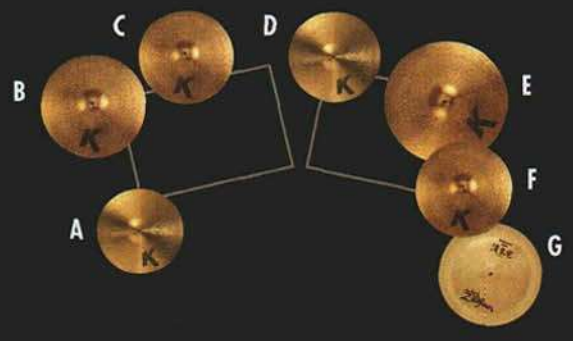
Sonny Emory on Marvin "Smitty" Smith

"Smitty is an incredible player and person. Those qualities have to go hand-in-hand. That makes Smitty all the more inviting to the listener. Smitty is always pushing the envelope, seeking new experiences. And he does it with intense passion and love for drumming."



Smitty's Tonight Show Set-up:

A. 13" K/Z HiHats
B. 17" K Custom Dark Crash
C. 15" K Custom Dark Crash
D. 14" K Dark Crash Thin
E. 20" K Custom Medium Ride
F. 16" K Custom Dark Crash
G. 16" A China High with 6 rivets



Marvin "Smitty" Smith on Zildjian:

"I rely on my musical sensibility to select cymbals. All Zildjian's cymbal ranges blend well together, but I prefer the K's and new K Customs. I really like their melodic tone row. The bell on the K Custom Medium Ride has great tone, it really cuts and at the same time has 'body'. The K Custom Dark Crashes have a sound that's unique to Zildjian."

"The K/Z HiHats are, in my opinion, one of Zildjian's best creations ever. The crisp sound, real definition, and overall wash create a warm but powerful sound."

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MP: Tell me how you guys managed to find each other in Bakersfield. I know there are a lot of people there, but it's not necessarily a music mecca.

DS: The music scene in Bakersfield goes in peaks and valleys, but when it's on a high, there's a lot more happening there than people would think. And we happened to get together when things were going alright there.

I'd been playing for five years by the time I hooked up with the other guys. I started at around nine years old. I remember picking up the drums on my own and not being able to get my mind off them. I just listened to music and kept beats to it, and made up some of my own beats in my head.

I didn't get my first kit until I was thirteen. I started playing in the school bands then, too, but I picked up the drumset on my own. Even then, I never really liked playing on my own—like sitting in a garage and practicing to records like other guys do. I was always more into playing with other people. I never took any lessons or studied from a book.

MP: But every player goes through some kind of learning curve. Who or what were your models for development?

DS: I kind of developed naturally as I went along, without ever really worrying about it. I started playing with some guys in high school, and even back then we were doing originals. We weren't any *good,* but it helped me develop my own style. I wasn't trying to copy anybody else's songs or sounds. I just played my own way.

Eddie Maluk

"I started playing with some guys in high school, and even back then we were doing originals. We weren't any good, but it helped me develop my own style."

I think I probably improved a lot mentally, just in the way I think about playing—coming up with ideas and then being able to play them on the drums. Sometimes I'd work out new ideas in my head, and sometimes I'd try them in a show, if I really felt confident in what I was trying to do.

MP: Were you always serious about music? I get the idea that music just sort of happened for you more than your *making* it happen.

DS: Well, I always liked playing. I mean, there was nothing else I really wanted to do. But I don't think I really took it seriously until Korn.

MP: But prior to Korn you recorded an EP in 1990 and an album in 1991 with LAPD.

DS: Yeah, but they weren't really very good. We were still trying to find our own band sound and develop our own individual sounds on our instruments. If you listen to those records now, you wouldn't even think we were the same guys playing on them. It was kind of a heavy, up-tempo punk, not at all what we're doing now.

But LAPD really was good for us, too, because we learned a lot about the industry and how things work. We played all the L.A. clubs—even some pay-to-play places—for about two years. Even when we didn't pay to play anymore, we were playing for nothing, which is still paying to play. We didn't just get a record deal after putting a few songs together. We definitely paid our dues.

MP: The pay-to-play gigs usually kill beginning bands off pretty quickly. How did you manage to stick through two years of that without crumbling?

DS: We were trying to get signed. That's what it was all about back then. We had fans and people came to the shows. We just had to believe that things were gonna get better and that somebody would notice us. We believed in ourselves, and it finally happened.

Come to think of it, I guess we were pretty lucky. First we had the LAPD deal with Triple X records, which was hard enough to get. Then we got off that label and found Jonathan [Davis, current Korn singer] in Bakersfield. Then we got a whole new record deal with Epic.

MP: What made you shift from the more upbeat pop-punk music to what you're doing now in Korn?

DS: It was a matter of maturing and finding our own sound as musicians. I know I just got tons better as a drummer. I became a lot more creative and percussive, using more of my set to create beats. I started mixing up the hi-hat, snare, and toms a lot and fooling around with different combinations. I'd heard some other drummers using the set that way, and I liked it. I didn't *pattern* myself after anyone, or try learning their beats, but it inspired me to kind of go in that direction.

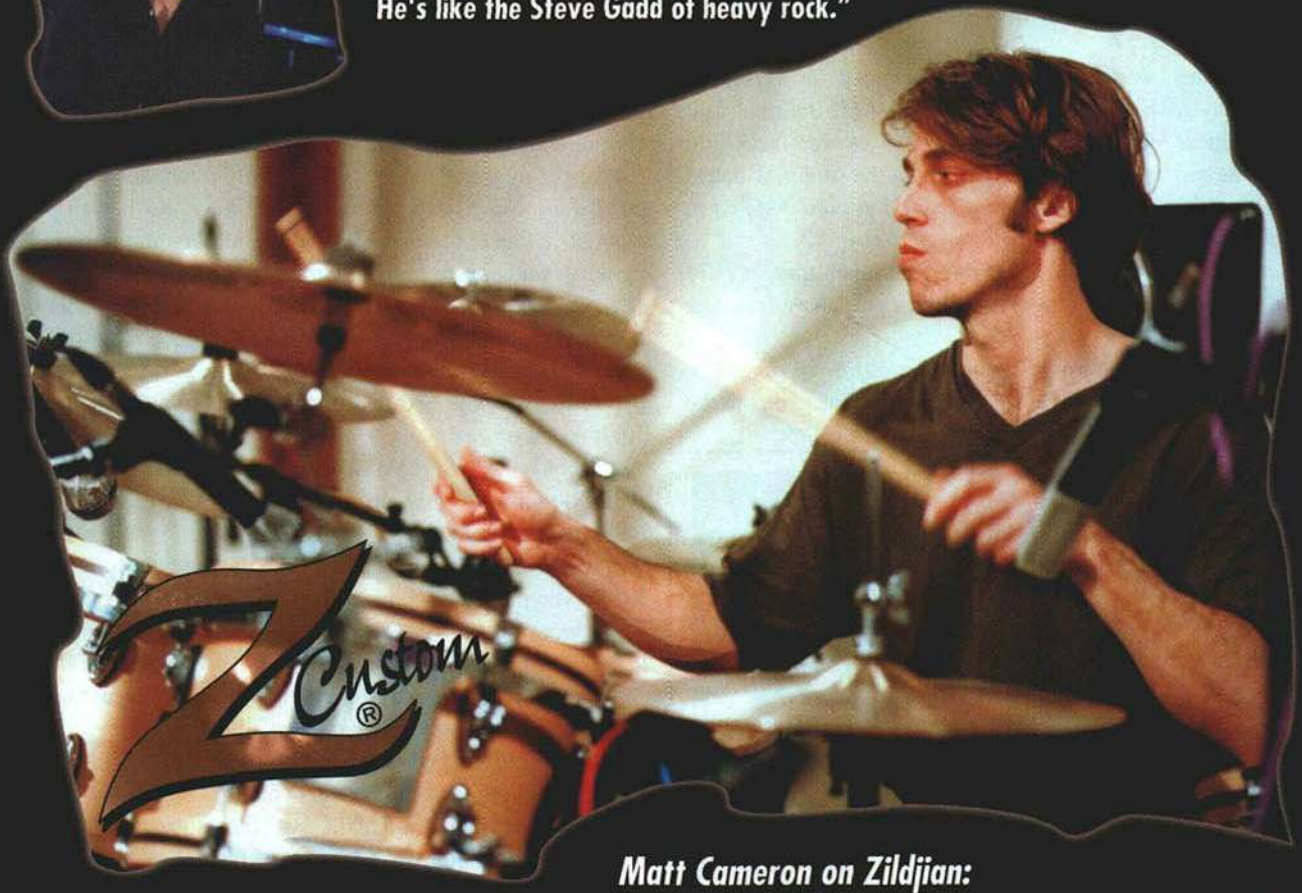
MP: I hear Korn has really taken a step up as far as production goes for your current tour.

DS: We're doing theaters now, which are the biggest places we've ever headlined, and we're using video projections. We open up with a "Davey & Goliath" skit, then we take off on some images

"Matt comes at you from nowhere with incredible odd-time stuff."

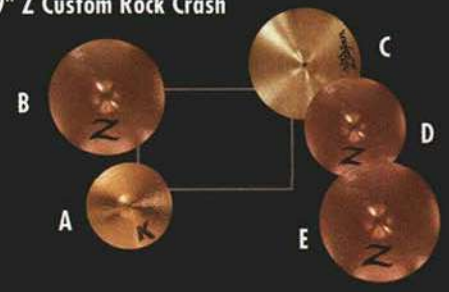
White Zombie's John Tempesta on Matt Cameron

"Matt's one of my favorite players. What I love about him is his capacity to play with such force and feeling, he's such a loose player, with the ability to come at you from nowhere with incredible odd-time stuff. He's like the Steve Gadd of heavy rock."



Matt's Soundgarden Set-up:

A. 15" K HiHat Top
   15" A New Beat HiHat Bottom
B. 19" Z Custom Medium Crash
C. 21" A Medium Ride
D. 18" Z Custom Medium Crash
E. 19" Z Custom Rock Crash



Matt Cameron on Zildjian:

"I want cymbals that have dynamics and volume that will be heard over screaming guitars and pounding bass. Z Custom Crashes really project, they have awesome tone, and sustain just enough... they're so clean sounding, so crisp."

"My A Medium Ride is my favorite. It has a very distinct ping, and it washes nicely with my crashes. My Hats are awesome too, a K top and an A New Beat bottom."

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from the album cover. We don't lean on it too much and it doesn't get in the way of the music, but it's good to enhance the show a little bit when you're playing bigger places. And the fans seem to like it.

MP: A lot of bands like to take some time off between tours and recording, but you guys went in to record the new album only a week after getting off your last tour. Why so fast?

DS: We originally wanted to put the record out last October, which was the same month in which we had released the first album two years earlier. It was more for the marketing than anything else, because November and December are pretty bad times to release records. That's when labels are concentrating on their Christmas albums, and we didn't want to get overshadowed by all that. We figured that if we put it out in October and started touring right away, it would have time to pick up some momentum for the Christmas rush.

Aside from that, we wanted to get back into it for ourselves, too. We actually took a month off after coming off the road, and we only had a few ideas floating around when we went back into rehearsals. The rest was written pretty much in the studio, which is how we figured it would go, because we don't get too inspired to write on the road.

MP: What about you personally? Do you find much time or have the desire to practice or play much on your own, away from the stage?

DS: No, I get totally away from the drums most of the time. The whole time I was home, from the time we came off the road to the time we started rehearsing again, I didn't play at all. Then, during the pre-production and recording period, I didn't play at all after putting down my tracks. I only started playing again when we started rehearsing as a band for the tour.

MP: But with your style and how it fits into what Korn is doing, it seems like you couldn't afford to be too loose. In fact, you seem really tight and precise on the record.

DS: I think that has to do with staying in shape physically more than staying in shape just for drumming. When I'm at home, I work out five days a week, and I think that has something to do with how I play the drums. I can take a break and not feel rusty when I come back.

MP: Once you're in pre-production, do you work out your parts much beforehand, or do you just go in with some very loose ideas before the tape rolls?

DS: On the first record, I had everything already worked out before we started tracking. We took a year and a half to put that record together, and I'd played the songs so much that my parts were already second-nature by the time we went into the studio. But for the new record we went in really fresh, and we wanted to get it done quickly to capture that energy. So it was probably about 60% knowing what I was going to play and 40% just playing whatever came to mind at that moment.

I laid down about three songs a day and finished all my tracks in five days. I don't think I did more than three takes on anything. I was a little nervous doing it that way, because I didn't want to just throw off some fills and then be unhappy with them later on. But it ended up really good, and it has a kind of energy I probably wouldn't have gotten if I'd worked everything out beforehand.

MP: Do you ever come up with beats on your own that turn into the basis of a song?

DS: "Good God" is one song where I came up with the beat first, just messing around with a beat I kept hearing in my head while we were writing for the new record. The opening song, "Twist," was like that too. That's how we come up with a lot of the music. Somebody will start playing something and the rest of us will work around it and see where it goes.

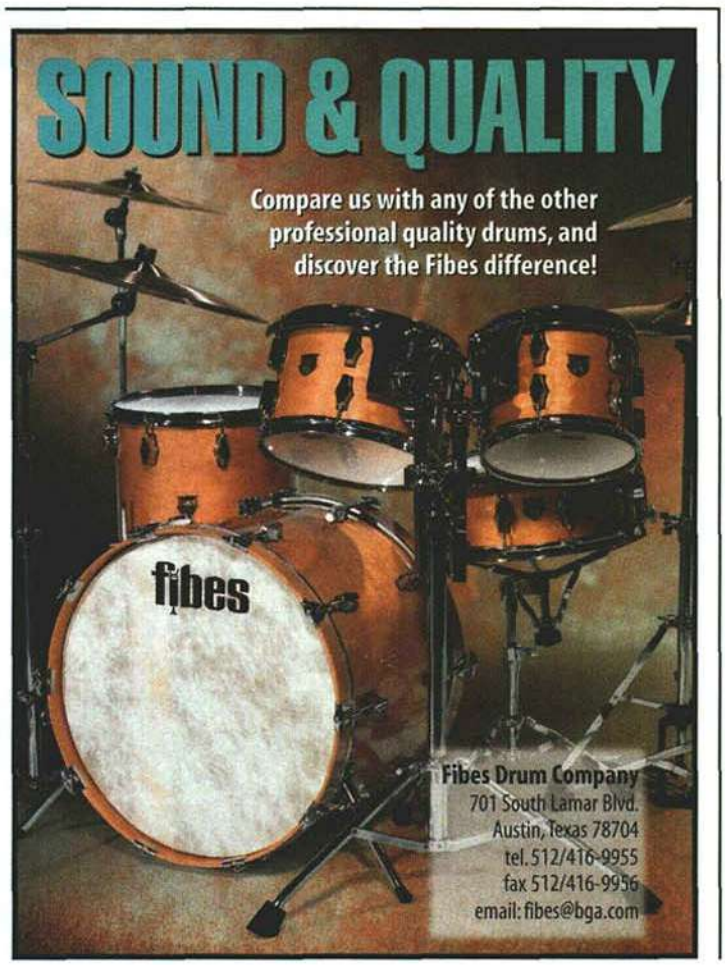
MP: Tell me a bit about your kit. You seem to go for high-pitched sounds with both your drums and cymbals.

DS: I use a 20" kick drum and a 3 1/2" piccolo snare. They're small drums, but I get a lot of volume out of them. I get a punchy sound out of the kick that I really like. I use a hard Danmar pad on the head and I turn my DW beaters around, so I'm hitting them with the hard side.

I started using the smaller drums for the first Korn record, and I got a really good sound. My setup is pretty tight, and it took me a while to get used to the smaller sizes. But once I did, it felt great. And even though they're smaller drums, I still think I get a pretty good bottom end to them. I also have an *808* sample pad hooked up to a Roland *TD-7*.

MP: What about your drumming future? Is there any area of music you want to get into, or any element about your playing you want to work on?

DS: No. I'm pretty satisfied. I know I'll get better on my own.



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Carter Beauford

Oriental Classic China, 20" & 22"

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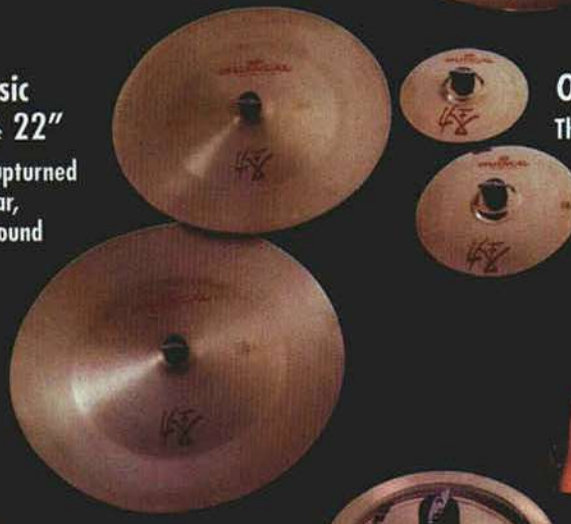

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Tim Alexander

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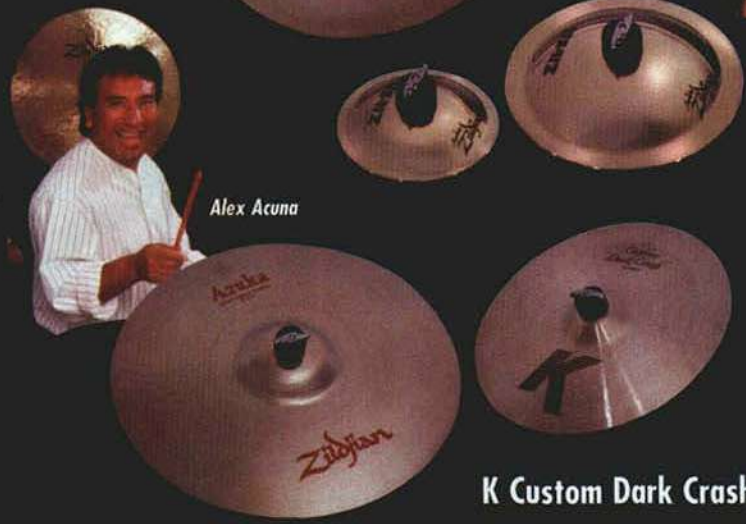

Alex Acuna

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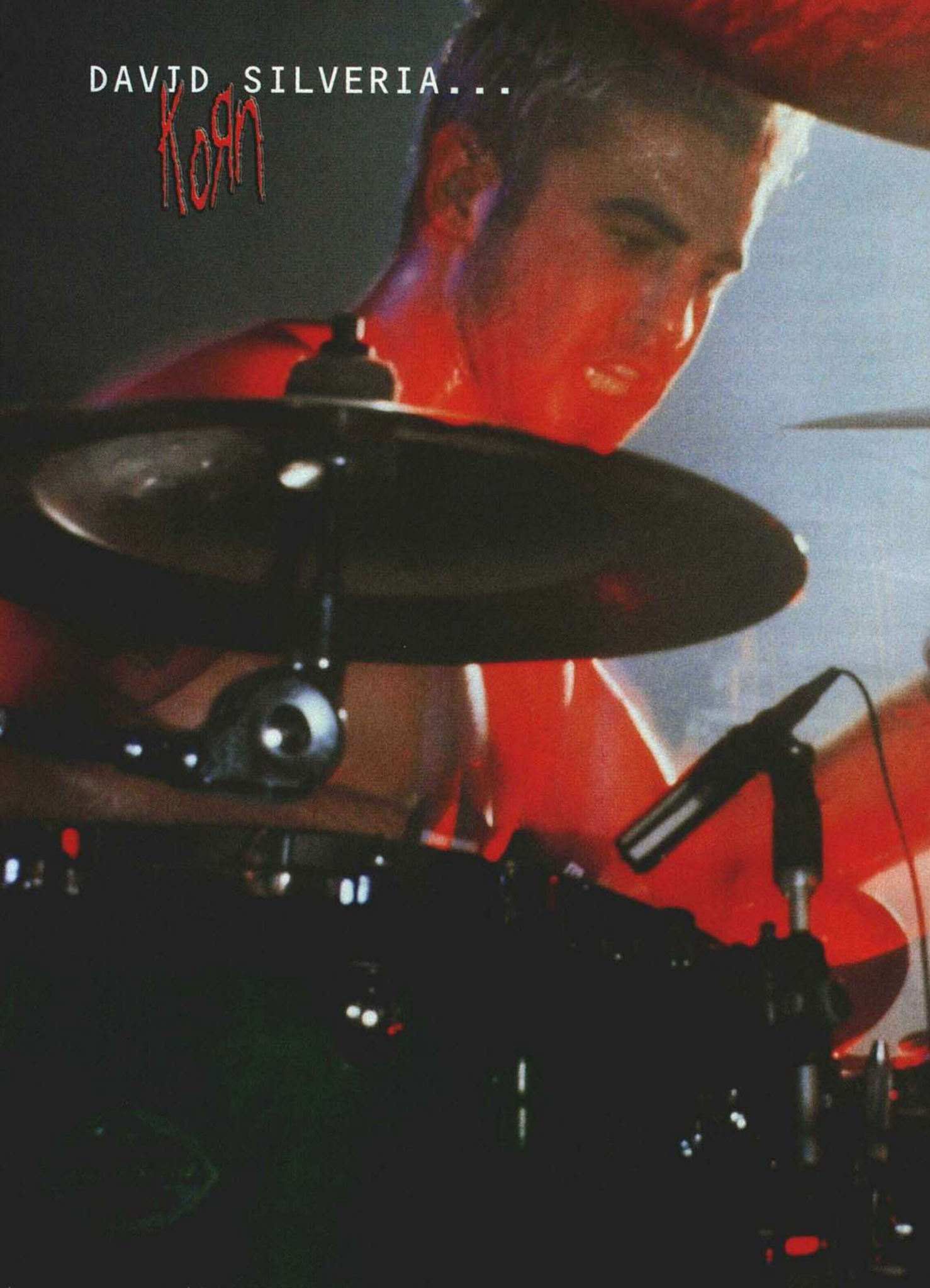
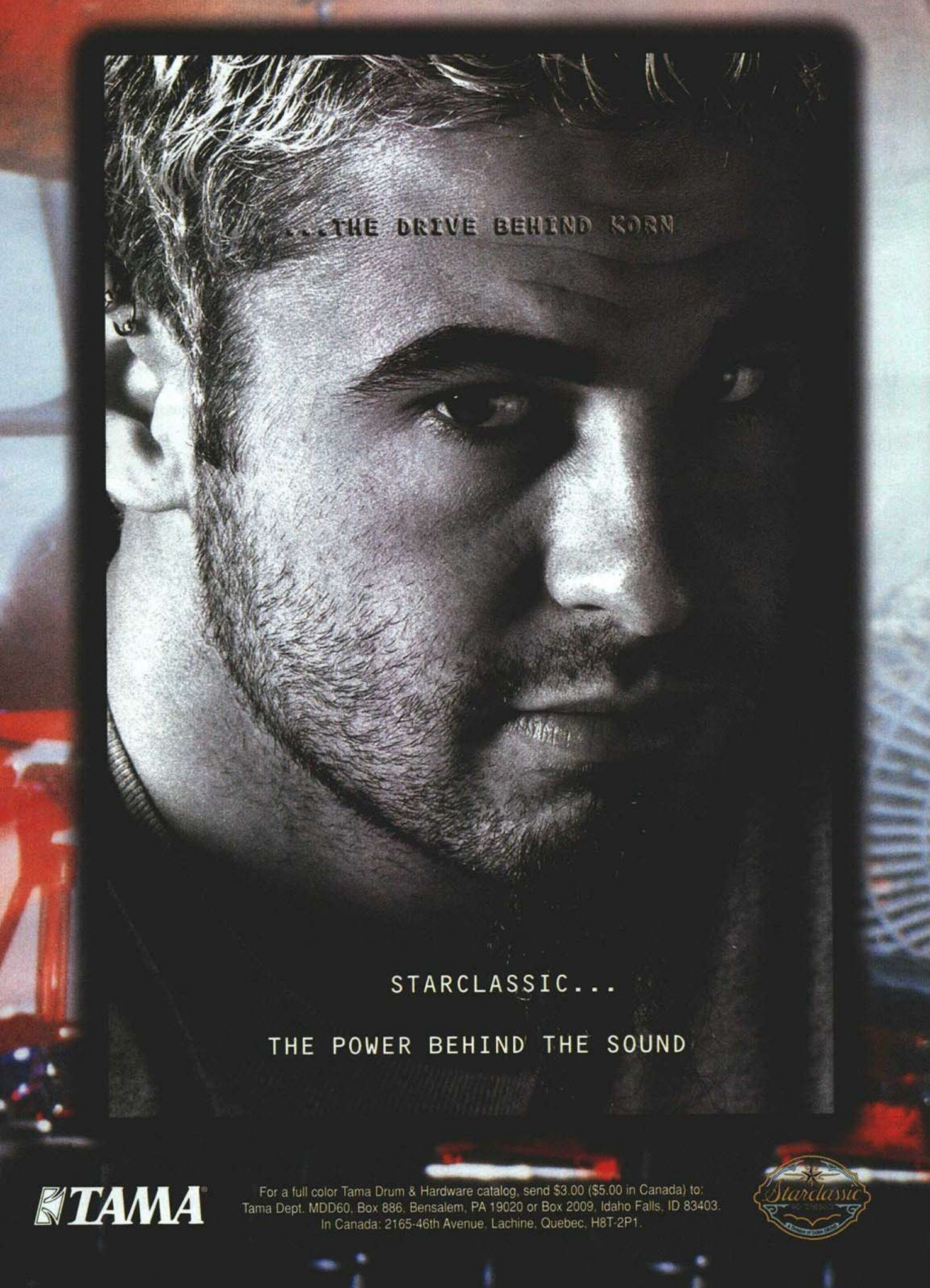

DAVID SILVERIA...
KORN



TAMA

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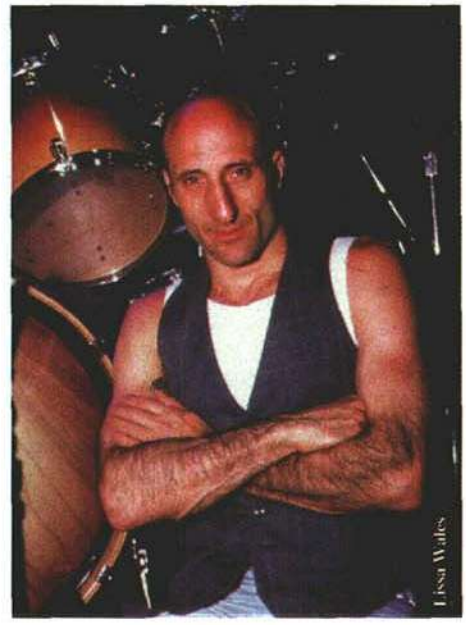
Kenny Aronoff

Q I'm an eighteen-year-old player who's been playing for about twelve years. I've always been inspired by your strong groove; it's incredible! My question is: What ride cymbal did you use to record the track "Straight, No Chaser" on the *Burning For Buddy* CD? I really like the sound of it; it's very bright and cuts through well.

Rob Zlatkoff
via Internet

Q I have been a big fan of yours since the early Mellencamp days, and I really do agree with you that "less is more." I'd like to know what snare drum you used on "Life Is Hard" on the new Mellencamp album. Was the sound the result of effects, or was it just the type of drum you used?

Dan Ashby
Muncie, IN



A To begin with Rob's question: The ride cymbal I used on "Straight, No Chaser" was a 20" *K Custom* ride. It was an older model, not the newer version introduced recently. On "Big Swing Face" (the track I had recorded before "Straight, No Chaser") I had used a 20" *A Custom* ride to match the 14" *A Custom* hi-hats I was using. I had John King of Zildjian pick them out for me, with the idea of trying to approximate Buddy's sound. But John had mentioned to me that as Buddy got older he gravitated toward a dryer, more articulate ride cymbal. He even got into the 21" *Rock Ride* at one point in order to get more definition.

Well, I had already recorded "Big Swing Face" with the *A Custom* ride. When we got to "Straight, No Chaser," it was significantly faster, and Neil Peart suggested that I go to the *K Custom* for a more defined, more articulate sound. My concern was that I didn't want it to be *so* dry that it was all "ping, ping, ping." I wanted it to have definition, but yet with an ambient, swelling sound that a good jazz cymbal will have. So I'm pleased and flattered that you liked the cymbal sound and took the time to acknowledge it. (Just for the record, the other cymbals I used on that track were two 18" *K Custom* crashes, an 18" *A Custom* crash, and the 14" *A Custom* hi-hats.)

As far as the miking goes, I must admit that I don't remember. It was quite a while ago. I do know that we recorded in Studio A at the Power Station in New York City. I just love that room; it's one of the best-sounding rooms for drums anywhere in New York.

By the way, if you want to get a good look at what I (and all the other drummers on the album) used on the *Burning For Buddy* CD, pick up the two *Making Of...* videos currently offered by DCI Video. They're really great for zeroing in on all the equipment, the rooms...maybe even the mic's!

To answer Dan's question: While we were recording John Mellencamp's recent record I really got into the use of loops. Unfortunately, John typically writes songs in tempos that most loops are definitely *not* in. Tempos around 80 or 90 BPM are good for funky loops. When you start getting up around 120, give or take, it can be difficult to find really cool loops. "Life Is Hard" came in at 119.

At any rate, I finally found the loop I wanted. On it, the snare had a long decay sound. Then I came back and played drumkit over the loop. I'm pretty well-known—especially on Mellencamp songs—for a high, ringy, wide-open sort of sound. This was achieved on either a 5x14 Ludwig *Supra-Phonic 400* from the 1960s, with a brass shell, or a 5x14 Ludwig *Aerolite.* But for the "Life Is Hard" track I wanted a snare sound that was the opposite of what I normally use. So I chose an 8x14 drum with a single-piece, solid-wood shell made by Solid Percussion several years ago. (Unfortunately they've since gone out of business.) The drum had a Remo *CS Black Dot* head, which has some muffling properties, and I probably added some additional muffling as well. So the final "snare sound" on "Life Is Hard" was actually a combination of my live, deep snare and the looped snare, which had more attack but a long decay.

John "JR" Robinson

Q I was blown away by your playing at Andre Agassi's "Grand Slam For Children" charity concert last year. What an incredible night of music! The sound of your kit was perfect, and I enjoyed watching your whole body lock to the beat. Not only was your groove tastefully silky, it was amazingly precise considering that you and forty-plus pickup musicians backed one different artist after another—including Elton John, Seal, Babyface, Faith Hill, and others—each with a distinctly different style.

Watching you glued to the charts, I wondered how tightly you were reading the music, how much rehearsal you got with the headliners (if any), and how much room you had to improvise or interpret. Very few musicians could have pulled off what you did so perfectly.

Jeff Bacon
Los Angeles, CA

A I'm glad you enjoyed the "Grand Slam For Children" concert. It was the second year that Andre assembled such great and diverse talent. The sound of my kit is attributable to two things. Number one is tuning the drums open, with depth and sustaining quality. Number two is that they are Pearl *Masters Series* drums. There is no other!

The rhythm section on that show was possibly the best all-around section ever: Nathan East on bass, Greg Phillinganes on

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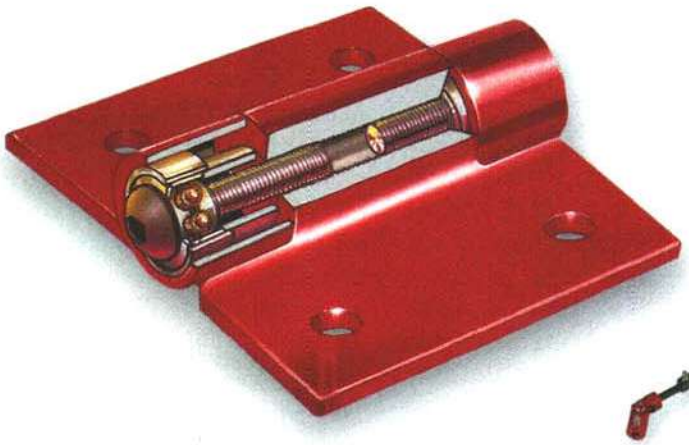

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DW Artists shown above (clockwise from top left): Vinnie Colaiuta (Sting), Steve Smith (Journey), Chad Wackerman (John Pattitucci), Gregg Bissonette (independent) and Walfredo Reyes, Jr. (LA studio).

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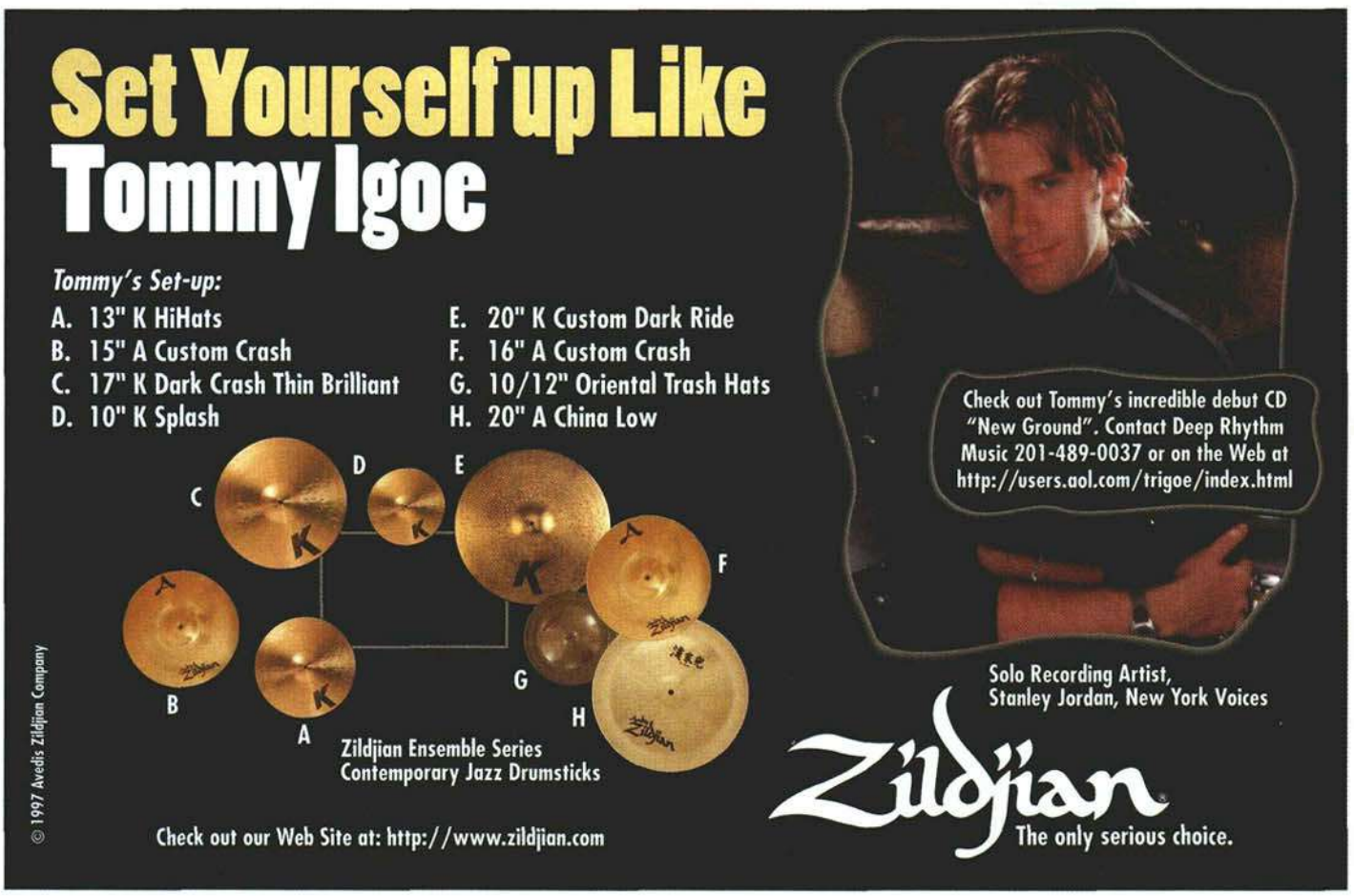
keys, David Foster on piano, Paul Jackson, Jr. and Michael Thompson on guitar, and Dave Boruff on sax. We had an eight-hour rehearsal on our own in L.A., then we flew to Las Vegas to rehearse for three hours with the orchestra. Only that evening did we actually get to play with all the artists. At that point, we found ourselves making adjustments, like changes in the arrangements or the tempos. This was a 100% reading gig! Some charts are master rhythm charts; others are just lead sheets. Elton's charts are all notated in drum language. I read the music and then apply my own style to it.

The "Grand Slam" band, like Barbra Streisand's touring band, was over fifty musicians strong. As the drummer in a situation like that, you are the leader. You have to picture it as though you are the engineer, and you'd better be ready to drive that train!



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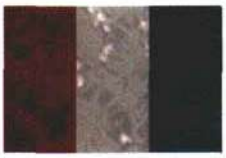

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DW Drum Artists shown above (clockwise from top left): Herman Matthews III (Tower Of Power), Denny Fongheiser (LA studio), Sean Kinney (Alice In Chains), Tris Imboden (Chicago) and Rick Allen (Def Leppard).

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Dealing With The Neighbors

Q I recently got a complaint from my neighbors that my drums are too loud. I play in the basement of my detached bungalow, with mufflers on the heads of my drums. I don't think it's fair that I should be condemned for playing an instrument that happens to be loud. I know there are electronic drumsets with complete volume control on the market, but I'm only fourteen years old. I can't afford something like that, nor can my parents. I also know that there are other drummers in the same situation I am in. What do we do?

Robert Brigden
Orillia, Ontario, Canada

A Start by doing things "the nice way." First, take whatever additional steps are possible to further muffle your drums and/or soundproof your playing environment. Second, schedule your practice sessions at reasonable times, like after school in the afternoons or early evenings on weekdays, and in the mid-afternoons on weekends. Don't play early in the morning on weekends, when your neighbors might be trying to sleep in, and don't play past 8:00 or so in the evening, when they might be trying to watch a favorite TV show (or perhaps putting small children to bed).

Next, talk to your neighbors. Let them know that you've taken all these steps in consideration of their feelings. At the same time, explain to them how important your drumming is to you, and ask them to have some consideration for *your* feelings in exchange for the efforts you've made on their behalf. Hopefully you can reach some sort of negotiated truce.

Now, that's the *nice* way. If your neighbors still complain, you can look into local regulations regarding noise levels and time limits. Most municipalities have restrictions about how late a household can make noise—usually referring to the playing of loud music, the use of power tools, the duration of parties, etc. It's important to remember that those restrictions work both ways. If you are prohibited from making noise after 9:00 P.M. (for example), that means that you have the right to make noise *until* 9:00 P.M.—and your neighbors have no legal grounds for objection. Just be sure you are within the bounds of the regulations before you make a stand in this manner.

Cymbal Maintenance

Q I'm pretty sure that I understand the concept of the coatings that are put on cymbals when they are new. My question pertains to oxidation on cymbals. All my cymbals have a brilliant finish, which I want to maintain. But although my 16" medium crash and my 10" China splash both come pleasantly clean after I wash them with a cymbal cream, they both have areas that seem to reoxidize within twenty-four hours. I'm not trying to win any beauty contests, but I do want my equipment to look its best. What can I do?

Den Morettin
Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada

A The following information comes from Rich Mangicaro of Paiste cymbals: "As is done by most other cymbal manufactur-

ers, the coating that we put on our cymbals is done at our factory after the manufacturing process is complete. It's designed to keep the cymbals looking their best and it offers easy cleaning of fingerprints. This is especially helpful while the cymbals are on display at music stores, since the prints can be wiped off with a soft cloth. However, the coating is not designed to last forever. In order for cymbals to *stay* looking their best, the player needs to be consistent with his or her cleaning, and not let the cymbals go too long without maintenance. When cymbals are not cleaned regularly, oil from the player's hands gets embedded into the grooves by the pressure of the stick strokes. When this goes on for too long, it makes the cymbals more difficult to clean.

"The process of oxidation takes place when the metal is exposed to the air. This usually happens after the cymbal's coating has been worn off for quite some time. The first thing we recommend for maintaining Paiste cymbals is to use only our *Paiste Cymbal Cleaner,* which is designed to clean the cymbal mildly. This is very important, since many cleaners on the market are too harsh; they can remove the coating or even alter the cymbal's physical structure—which, in turn, actually *advances* the oxidation effect.

"If a player wishes, after he or she cleans the cymbal with our cleaner, a product like *Pledge* furniture polish can be applied lightly to the cymbal to further protect it by sealing it from the elements with a wax-like coating."

Non-Latin Conga Drumming

Q I've been playing conga drums for almost two years, and most of what I've learned has come from instructional videos. (In rural Maryland, conga instructors don't exist.) Unfortunately, all the videos I've found deal exclusively with Latin rhythms. Afro-Cuban music is great, but I'd like to learn some "American" conga techniques. Do you know of any books or videos that deal with conga instruction in other than Latin styles?

Charlie Shobe
Monrovia, MD

A To answer your basic question: No, we are not aware of any instructional material on non-Latin applications of Latin-style drums. What you are seeking is a method of using a tool designed for one job to perform a different—albeit related—job. In most such situations, it's necessary to first learn the correct techniques required to perform the original job before you can adapt those techniques to other-than-usual applications. With that in mind, studying the available books and videos on Latin-style conga playing will give you the physical techniques necessary to make the various sounds that the instrument is capable of producing. (See the Hand Drummer's Resource Guide on page 136 of this issue.) What you *do* with those sounds is then up to your own musical imagination.

Although instructional materials on non-Latin playing may not be available, you might gain some valuable guidance from performance videos and recordings by artists who include congas and other percussion in non-Latin applications. The Allman Brothers, the Doobie Brothers, Janet Jackson, Madonna, Stevie Wonder, Al Jarreau, Kenny Loggins, and many other rock and pop artists feature such percussion heavily.

The Ultimate Stick Grip

Q I am on a quest for a consistent, reliable stick grip. I'm a right-handed player who's been drumming for twelve years. Over that period I've experimented with various hand and finger positions, but I've not found anything that works all the time. I play matched grip (German style) almost exclusively, and I find that my left hand has more power and control, but my right hand is faster. However, when I drop a stick, it tends to be the right one.

Exactly where in the right hand are the pressure points? At what part of the thumb and index finger and/or middle finger does most of the pressure reside? And may these pressure points/fulcrums change as one moves around the kit or increases speed?

Many top drummers, like Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, and Simon Phillips, seem to hold the right stick between the "flat" part of the thumb and the first knuckle of the index finger. Steve Gadd, however, seems to let his right index finger "rest" on top of the stick, while Elvin Jones and Max Roach sometimes hold the right stick between the second knuckle of the index finger and the side of the thumb. I've tried *all* of these grips, but I can't find a reliable one. One may give me more speed and fluidity, while another gives me more control. I know my drumming will improve if I can find a secure, reliable grip. It's extremely frustrating to feel held back from playing the way I want to because I can't get complete control of the sticks.

Chris Kozlowski
New Britain, CT

A Unfortunately, you are asking for an absolute in an area where absolutes do not exist. There are as many "correct" grips as there are drummers. The very reason that Vinnie, Dave, Simon, Steve, Elvin, and Max utilize different grips is that those are the grips that work for *them.* In some cases a player's grip is simply the one that that player was originally taught. That's what he learned, so that's what he made work for him. In other cases, it's the result of the same sort of lengthy trial-and-error process that you have gone through. And often the result of that process is a compromise, settled on in order to gain the greatest portion of the speed, fluidity, and control that you mention.

Keep in mind, too, that sometimes a given player will *adapt* his or her grip to the needs of the situation or the musical style. Many drummers have said in *MD* interviews that they will switch from matched to traditional grip and back again, depending on whether they want more power or more sensitivity. Others have commented that they will vary the point at which they hold the stick, in order to improve the rebound or get more impact.

Where you hold the stick in your hand (the relationship of the thumb, fingers, etc. to the stick) must be based on factors like the size of your hands, the size and model of the stick itself, the way you approach your drums physically, and the performance you seek from your sticks. There can be no single grip that answers all these needs for every drummer. Our advice is to continue your experimentation until you find a grip that suits your needs *best,* if not perfectly. Then work to develop your skills using that grip, remembering that it will be to your advantage to retain a certain amount of flexible adaptability.

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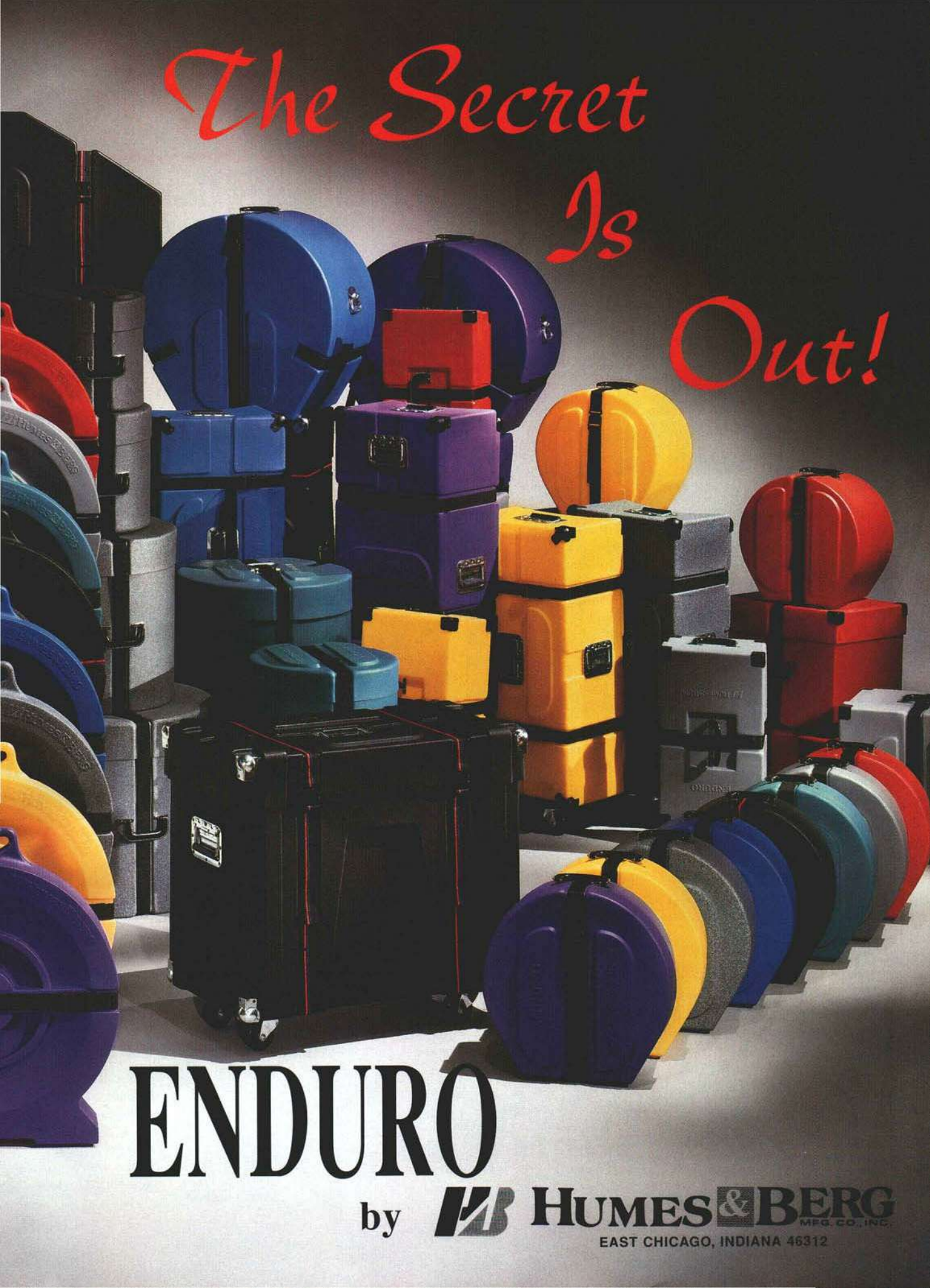
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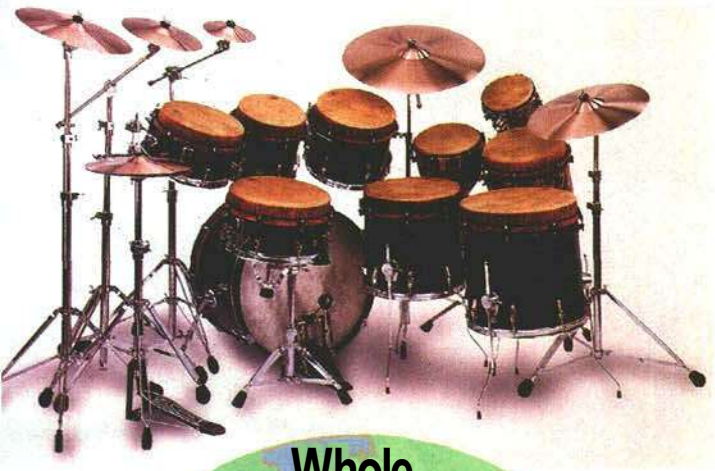

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Remo Mondo Drums

Wanna expand your world (percussion)? Remo's new *Mondo* drums, designed to bridge the gap between conventional drumset and world percussion/hand drumming, can be played with sticks, brushes, mallets, fingers, or hands. Featuring *Acousticon* shells with specially formed molded bearing edges, they're available in five, six, and nine-piece configurations. Individual drum sizes include 16x18, 16x20, and 16x22 bass drums; 10x10 and 10x12 toms; 7 1/2x12 and 7 1/2xl4 snare drums; and 8", 10", and 12" *Tombeks.* "Kit" drums come in *Ebony, Natural,* or *Emerald Venwood* finishes; *Tombeks* gome in color-coordinated *Multi-Mask, Fossil Fantasy,* or *African Stripe FabriFinish.* A standard five-piece set lists for $2,650.

Classic Beauty, Classic Sound
Meinl Classics Cymbals

Paying homage to the culture and bronze-casting skills of the ancient Egyptians, Meinl has introduced *Classics* cymbals. *Classics'* unique sound derives from a specially formulated bronze alloy, "hard hammering," and a special shape. They also feature the Egyptian "Utchat Eye" symbol on the logo. Available in *Medium* and *Powerful* ranges, the line includes six different 13" and 14" hi-hats, crashes from 14" to 18", three 20" and 21" rides, 16" and 18" Chinas, and 8", 10", and 12" splashes.

Meinl has also expanded its *Meteor* student cymbal line to include 16" ($90), 18" ($104), and 20" ($130) Chinas and 8" ($31), 10" ($35), and 12" ($41) splashes.

A Nice Finish To 25 Years
DW Fiddleback Finishes

DW catering to the string section? Not a chance. But in observance of its 25th anniversary, DW has introduced bass drums, snare drums, and toms in special fiddleback maple finishes. The three available limited-edition "book-matched" finishes are (as shown below) *Anniversary Amber, Natural,* and *Light Tobacco,* each with a deluxe commemorative wood inlay. All have DW's timbre-matched, all-maple shells with graduated reinforcing hoops and precision bearing edges.

DW also recently unveiled its *7000* series of middle-weight, single-braced stands, and improvements on its 5000 series pedals including the *50BH* "Delta" ball-bearing hinge ($40 list for retrofit; free and standard on new pedals), said to provide a "smoother, faster feel and a cleaner, more streamlined look."

Head 'Em Up, Move 'Em Out, Raw Ride

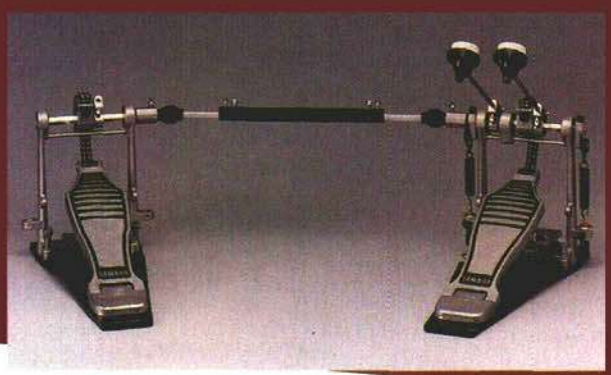
Sabian HH Raw Dry Ride

Sabian's veritable eruption of new product activity includes the *HH Raw Dry Ride,* available in 20" ($324) and 22" ($384) sizes. Hand-hammered to a moderately "high" shape and unlathed for denser metal throughout, they produce a "solid, precise stick attack whose somewhat arid response opens up with a limited degree of tonal spread as the cymbal is played faster or harder."

Also from Sabian: Described as a "scaled-down" version of 13" and 14" *Fusion Hats,* their new 10" *AA Mini Fusion Hats* ($222) have an *AA* top and an unlathed, extra-heavy *HH Hand Hammered Leopard* bottom with air vents. Effective as main, remote, or X-hats, their response is called "bright, cutting, extremely fast, clean, and precise." The *Hand Hammered 21" Vintage Ride* ($354) is a thin, big-bell cymbal said to recreate the full-wash sound of rides made in the '50s through the '70s. Its "aggressive, high-pitched, and semi-dissonant full-tone" response is suited to riding and crash-riding for a "wall-of-sound roar." The thin weight and small bell of the new 17" AA *Fast Crash* ($198) accelerates its response rate, and its raised profile delivers a high-pitched, cutting response that is "fast like a splash and loud like a crash." Sabian's new *AAX Dark Crashes,* available in 14" ($150), 16" ($183), and 18" ($213) sizes, feature the "bright, controlled response of *AAX* series, but with the speed, darkness, and dryness of small-bell, low-profile design." Their dark fundamental is said to respond at any volume with total overtone control.

Kick It Good!

Yamaha Bass Drum Pedals



Seeking a more stable relationship with your bass drum? Yamaha has introduced a new line of bass drum pedals with a crossbar under the beater cam hex rod for a stable feel and reduced friction and binding in hex rod bearings. Available in a variety of single ($190), double ($540), and slave ($370) pedal configurations, double-chain *800* series pedals feature an "accelerator" attachment that allows center of the cam roller to be changed for alternate stroke feel, plus independent angle/stroke length adjustments, independently adjustable beater head angle, interchangeable beater heads, one-touch spring tension adjustment, bass drum hoop swivel clamp, a titanium beater rod, and an angled base plate for uneven stages. Lighter weight 600 and *700* series single-chain models are also available.

Get'Em While They're Warm

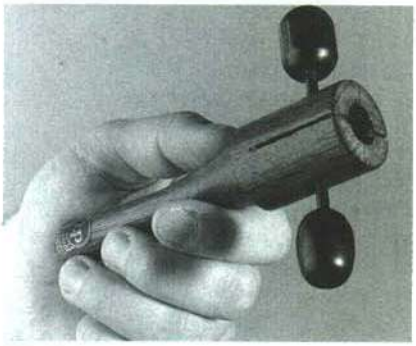
Pearl Mahogany Classic Drums

Looking to mellow out your drum sound? The 4-ply, 5 mm mahogany shells on Pearl's new limited edition *MHX Mahogany Classic* drums do just that, generating "incredible lows ideal for recording," but their maple glue rings strengthen the shell and brighten overall tone, producing highs claimed to be "on par with the finest maple shells." Offered in a natural red mahogany finish, the line's other standard features include solid brass swivel nuts and chrome-plated *Masters* minimal-contact lugs, creating a "wristwatch-like beauty." *I.S.S. (Integrated Suspension System)* rack-tom mounts and *R-40* "tunnel"-design rubber tips on floor toms yield "noticeably improved sustain." *SuperHoop II* steel rims on toms are said to make rimshots easier.

And taking the high road, Pearl has introduced its *MRX Masters Custom Extra* line, whose 6-ply 100% maple shells (slightly thicker than its 4-ply *Masters Custom* series) are said to provide extra "volume and projection while retaining the warmth and roundness of the classic *Masters* sound." *MRXs* are available in eight super-high-gloss lacquer finishes.

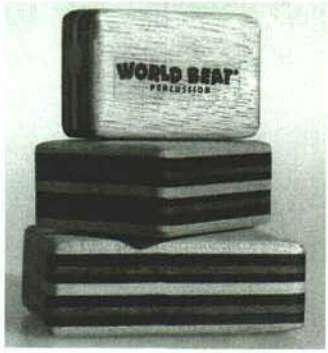
Get Snockered!

LP Snocker And World Beat Box Shakers



Is that a woodpecker in your hand, or are you just glad to see me? Producing a loud, yet warm sound described as a cross between LP's *Ching Chok* and castanets, the LP *Snocker* ($21) adds another tonal color for adventurous percussionists.

And if too much snockering gives you the shakes, try LP's new *World Beat Box Shakers,* high-, medium-, and low-pitched shakers made from rich-colored wood. The three-piece set lists for $14.



I Feel The Earth Move

Zildjian Earth Plates

Earth Plates

Zildjian conducting tectonics research? No, but their recent cymbal R&D may make *your* earth move. Made of a secret alloy, Zildjian's new *Earth Plates* are cast, rolled, and tempered to produce "rich, natural, earthy tones when played with mallets or sticks." They are available in larger, low-pitched ($136) and smaller, high-pitched ($95) models.

Also new from Zildjian: The 18" *Salsa Timbale Cymbal* ($272) joins the existing 18" *Timbale Cymbal* in their *Azuka* line. According to Zildjian it produces a "bright stick sound and fast brilliant crash, together with penetrating bell sounds." The 20" *A Custom Projection Ride* ($312) cymbal features a larger bell, a unique taper, and a heavier weight delivering a "clean, clear stick sound and penetrating bell." *Projection Hi-Hats,* available in 13" ($344) and 14" ($382) pairs have an extra-large bell for greater flexibility in playing accents, offering "excellent stick definition and a loud, clear, full-bodied 'chick.'" A *Custom Chinas* in 18" ($284) and 20" ($324) sizes yield a "broad, colorful attack with a good degree of 'trashiness,' yet the decay exhibits all the exquisite highs and lows characteristic of the entire *A Custom* range." *Classic Chinas* available in 20" ($301) and 22" ($357) feature a "dramatic, swooping, and very broad upturned lip" said to produce a "fabulous, explosive China sound with richness and full-bodied, yet trashy overtones." *Trash Splashes,* available in 9" ($113) and 11" ($132) are ultra-thin, with a unique square bell. Their sound is called "spectacularly fast and trashy."

Salsa Timbale Cymbal, A Custom Chinas, **and** *Projection Hi-hats*

S-Wonderful, S-Marvelous, S-Class-y

Sonor S-Class Drums

Sonor's new *S-Class* drums have birch/maple shells for both warmth and brightness, plus fiber bass drum hoops said to be stronger than normal hoops. *S-Class* bass drums and toms come in five stain finishes; snares come in maple, brass, or steel in a variety of shell sizes. Hardware features include the *T.I.M. (T-Bar Isolation Mount)* bass drum/tom mount system and *S.A.M. (Sonor Auxiliary Mounts)* hardware, which also holds items like microphone and cowbell holders. A five-piece kit with hardware lists for $2,995.

And What's More...

Meinl Percussion is now offering *Livesound Bongos* with *True Skin* buffalo-skin heads. Retailing for $210 (or $270 with gold hardware), they are now available in ten solid colors, plus three sunburst finishes. Also new from Meinl: a tambora—played with one hand and one stick in traditional Dominican merengues.

Aquarian's *American-Vintage* heads have a slightly larger hoop diameter that allows an easy fit on most vintage drums, and an improved collar design that seats quickly and resonates with the bearing edge and shell. Available in medium and thin weights, the heads also feature a special formula of Aquarian's long-lasting *Satin Finish* coating for a traditional look and a warm, open sound. Special bass drum head designs provide a traditional look and sound.

Pro•Mark recently introduced *TUBZ* ($12.95 per pair), high-impact, semi-rigid, hollow plastic tubes that can be used on a drumkit, cymbals, timbales, congas, and many percussion instruments. Also new from Pro-Mark: *Will Kennedy* and *Joe Morello* signature sticks and *Milt Jackson* vibe mallets.

Hardcase is offering two new high-impact polyethylene cases, its new cymbal case will hold up to twelve 22" cymbals and has a reinforced heavy-duty center spindle, foam-padded base and lid, and carrying handles. The company's new hardware cases, available in a 40" model with or without heavy-duty wheels, and a 52" model with wheels, feature water-proof lids with quick-lock closing straps and plastic covered handles.

Making Contact

Aquarian Accessories
1140 North Tustin Ave.
Anaheim.CA92807
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Drum Workshop
101 Bernoulli Circle
Oxnard. CA 93030
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Hardcase/MBT International
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Hohner/HSS, Sonor Division
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5014 cymbal stand
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5½x14 matching snare drum

Premier 3000 Series Hardware
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3014 cymbal stand
3015 hi-hat stand
3016 boom stand
294 chain drive pedal
4396 Rock Lok tom holder
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XL Protechtor Cymbal Case
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natural birch

XL Protechtor
Snare Drum Case

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No purchase or telephone call necessary to enter. See Consumer Disclosure below for odds and other details.

Consumer Disclosure

1. Call 1-900-786-3786. Cost 99¢ per call. You must call from the number where you wish to be notified. Or send a 3" x 5" or 4" x 6" postcard with your name, address, and telephone number to: MD/Premier Contest, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. 2. Enter as often as you wish, but each entry must be phoned or mailed separately. 3. ODDS OF WINNING EACH PRIZE DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 4. CONTEST BEGINS 1/5/97 AND ENDS 3/29/97. PHONE CALLS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL 11:59 P.M. EST 3/29/97. POSTCARDS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 3/29/97 AND RECEIVED BY 4/7/97. 5. Grand Prize Drawing: First, second, third, and fourth prize winners will be selected by random drawing on April 10, 1997 and notified by phone on April 10, 1997. 6. Weekly prizes will be awarded by random drawing from all phone calls and postcards received between 12:00 A.M. Sunday through 11:59 P.M. Saturday. The weekly drawing and notification (by phone) will take place on the Wednesday following the conclusion of each weekly contest. 7. Employees and their immediate families of Modern Drummer, Premier Percussion, Zildjian, and XL Specialty Percussion and their affiliates are ineligible. 8. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 9. Open to residents of the U.S. and Canada, 12 or older provided that CALLERS UNDER 18 OBTAIN PARENTAL OR GUARDIAN PERMISSION TO ENTER. California residents under 18 may not participate. Residents of MN, GA, LA, NJ, and Canada may enter by mail only. Void in FL and where prohibited by law. 9. First Prize - One (1) complete Premier Genista 6-piece Drumkit including Premier 5000 Series Hardware, Zildjian Cymbals, XL Protechtor Cases, and Zildjian Drumsticks T-Shirt Pack*, (as shown above, left), approximate retail value $6,100. 10. Second Prize - One (1) Premier XPK 5-piece Drumkit including Premier 3000 Series Hardware, Zildjian Edge Cymbals, XL Protechtor Cymbal Case, and Zildjian Drumsticks T-Shirt Pack*, (as shown above, top), approximate retail value $2,500. 11. Third Prize - One (1) 6x10 Soprano Snare Drum, XL Protechtor Case, and Zildjian Drumsticks T-Shirt Pack*, approximate retail value $495. 12. Fourth Prize - Five winners will each receive a Zildjian Drumsticks T-Shirt Pack*, approximate retail value $95.95 each. 13. Weekly prizes (12 weeks, 1 T-shirt per week) - T-shirts, approximate retail value $15 each. Approximate retail value of all prizes $9,800.00. 14. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. (201) 239-4140. 15. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or a winners list, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

Zildjian Azuka Cymbals

by Victor Rendon

"Zildjian has created a new range of cymbals especially for Latin and Afro-Cuban music: Azuka. Working with legendary virtuoso Alex Acuna, Zildjian has not only perfected cymbals for traditional Latin playing, but created brand new sound colors for the percussionist's pallete."

The above is a quote from a flyer that was included with the *Azuka* models sent to *MD* for review. The line includes two 15" *Multi-Crashes,* one 13" *Latin Crash,* and one 18" *Timbale Cymbal.* When I received the *Azukas,* I asked myself, "How are these cymbals different? What qualifies them as special cymbals for Latin playing?" To find out, I used them over a thirty-day period in a variety of musical situations that included an off Broadway show (which required some soft passages), a straight-ahead four-horn salsa band, several Latin-jazz groups in which I played drumset or timbales, and a Latin big band with eight brass, five saxes, and a full percussion section (congas, bongos, timbales, and drumset). Timbale master Tito Puente also played them on one occasion while sitting in.

These various musical situations allowed me to test the *Azuka* cymbals for versatility in timbale, drumset, and general percussion settings. Keep in mind that there are as many types of Latin music as there are Latin American countries. The *Azukas* were mostly used with music based on Afro-Cuban styles known in the US as salsa or Latin jazz. Let's see how well they reach Zildjian's lofty goals.

18" Timbale Cymbal

The *Azuka* availability chart states that this is the "perfect all-around cymbal for timbales," with "extremely clear, high-end bell response, a dry ride response for good stick articulation, and a fast opening for fast dynamic crashes with excellent projection and medium decay." It was with this criteria that I evaluated this cymbal.

The first thing I listened for was the bell cup sound, which is probably the most important aspect of a cymbal used in Latin playing (particularly on timbales). The cup of the cymbal is usually used in horn instrumental solos and the mambo section of an arrangement. The cymbal was played with a 7/16" timbale stick and also with a *5A* wood-tip stick. The cup of the *Timbale Cymbal* is rather large, and sounds clear and high-ended. The timbale stick seemed to give the bell a little more bite than did the regular drumstick, which may be due to the thickness of the stick. With the big band and Latin-jazz group, the

WHAT'S HOT

- 18" *Timbale Cymbal has a* clear, high-ended cup that penetrates through horn lines; blends well with cowbells; good dynamic crashes for band kicks
- 15" *Multi-Crash* can be played with the bare hand, which can be useful for a hand percussionist; punchy, smooth decay, and good sustain
- 15" *Multi-Crash* with rivets can be played with the bare hand; good for ballads and soft passages

WHAT'S NOT

- 18" *Timbale Cymbal* ride gets washy when played hard; sound gets lost in louder volumes; lacks versatility
- 15" *Multi-Crash* lacks power and projection; sounds a bit tinny and gongy
- 15" *Multi-Crash* with rivets decays too quickly when struck lightly with fingers or hand
- 13" *Latin Crash* lacks body and sustain; sounds gongy

cup projected well even in the higher-volume mambo sections. It also blended well with the bongo bell—which is of primary importance for good ensemble playing. I did have problems hearing the bell over a somewhat higher-volume horn section in the salsa band. (However, in all fairness, the band in general was a bit over-amplified by the house engineer, and the horn section was standing about one foot behind me.)

The next thing that I listened for was the ride response and crash effect. The cymbal is medium-thin and produced a low tone. It had a dry response with just enough overtones to provide a nice cushion behind horn solos and ensemble work at a medium volume. I found that I could play the body of the cymbal at various volume levels and still hear the articulation of the stick. However, the sound got washy when I played harder, and it sometimes became lost in certain higher-volume sections such as the mambo.

Timbale players use the ride cymbal and a rimshot simultaneously to crash and kick horn lines—very much like a drumset player. With the big band, I found the cymbal to be very effective in this area. The crashes with the horns sounded full and round. Sustained crashes had a nice spread and gradual decay. However, using the *Timbale Cymbal* as a second ride on the drumset did not work well, due to its low pitch and dry effect. It just didn't blend well with my other cymbals. It seems that the cymbal works well for what it was made for: playing with a set of timbales.

In general, this was my favorite cymbal of the *Azuka* set. Every drummer/percussionist who heard this cymbal commented on the clarity of the bell cup and the attack on band kicks. It has a list price of $272.

15" Latin Multi-Crash (Hand & Stick)

This cymbal was the best of the three crashes that were sent from the factory. It is a 15" crash cymbal designed for playing either with the bare hand or with sticks. I found this cymbal to work best in a multi-percussion setting as opposed to with a combination of timbales or drumset. The surface of the cymbal is smooth and the edge is tapered downward, which cushions the impact of the hand on the metal. It gave a full tone when struck lightly with the full hand. A full crash effect was produced by hitting it sharply. It worked well for short crash effects and for providing a different color to smooth passages. This can be a great advantage to a conga player or other hand percussionist who may have use for various cymbal colors. Hitting the cymbal with a timbale stick provided a punchy sound with good sustain and gradual decay. However, the sound lacked power and projection when used in a drumset or with timbales. The sound was on the tinny side and also sounded gongy. This is not to say that it is a bad cymbal, but drumset players would have to be careful how this cymbal is used. It's priced at $210.

15" Latin Multi-Crash (Hand & Stick With Rivets)

This is the same crash cymbal as the previous one with the addition of three rivets to provide a trashier sound in the high end and to add more body (which can be useful when the cymbal is played lightly on ballads and soft passages). I tried different approaches to playing the cymbal: hitting it lightly with one finger or whole hand, rolling with two fingers, rolling with a pair of soft mallets, and playing it with brushes in a ballad. Hitting the cymbal with one finger initially produced a full sound, but the sound decayed quickly after two beats at a ballad tempo. The cymbal produced the same effect when struck with the whole hand—except that the tone quality was not as good. Rolling with the fingers or mallets achieved better results, but the sound quality lacked body. However, on a Latin big band ballad it sounded quite full—with good sustain—when struck with a brush. This model is also priced at $210.

13" Latin Crash

This cymbal was the weakest of the set, with very little body and sustain. It is a paper-thin crash that proved adequate for quick punchy figures that didn't call for tone quality. Playing it in isolation revealed a tone quality somewhere between washy and gongy. Looking at the brighter side, it can serve as a sound effect for the multi-percussionist. It carries a list price of $172.

Did these cymbals enhance my Latin playing in the streets of New York City? Probably not. However, they do provide yet another choice of cymbals for the multi-percussionist looking for different sound effects. You might ask, "What does *Azuka* mean?" The word "azuka" is derived from the Spanish word "azucar," meaning "sugar" or "sweet." It's also an expression that Celia Cruz (the queen of Latin music) uses often in her performances. I found these cymbals to be both sweet and *low.*

Victor Rendon is one of New York City's busiest Latin drummer/percussionists. His credits include work with Xavier Cougat, Mongo Santamaria, and Carlos "Potato" Valdez, and he continues to perform regularly with top Latin artists. He is also a respected teacher and the publisher of a newsletter called Latin Percussionist.

Remo Layne Redmond Signature Tambourines

by Rick Mattingly

WHAT'S HOT
- all three models provide alternative sound sources for drumset players as well as percussionists
- *Tar-rine* is especially versatile and adaptable to playing styles

WHAT'S NOT
- *Riq* model is particularly heavy and can be difficult to control

Those who think of a tambourine only as a shell with jingles are missing out on a lot of the tradition of the instrument—as well as its possibilities. A true tambourine has a head and is a member of the frame drum family. In the right hands, a tambourine can produce a range of colors and effects far beyond the sound obtainable by slamming it against your thigh. Percussionists have included tambourines in their arsenal for years. But drumset players would also do well to consider them as alternative sound sources for live playing or recording—especially in this age of "unplugged" performances.

Layne Redmond specializes in tambourine performance. Viewing her video, *Ritual Drumming,* or listening to her CD, *Since The Beginning* (both available on Interworld), is a revelation even for those (like myself) who may already be familiar with orchestral tambourine techniques or the Brazilian pandeiro techniques employed by performers such as Airto. Of special interest is her ability to produce a variety of traditional hand-drum techniques with her right hand while manipulating a pair of jingles with her left hand so as to produce castanet-like clicks.

Remo is now producing a line of *Layne Redmond* signature tambourines, which includes the *Riq,* the *Lotus Tambourine,* and the *Tar-rine.* Each features an *Acousticon* shell with an overlay of maple veneer stained with an aqua finish. The heads are Remo *Fiberskyn 3* models, which are *great* for thumb rolls. Each head has a Lotus insignia, which is one of the oldest symbols found on frame drums and represents creation and birth.

The *Riq* is based on the traditional Middle Eastern tambourine that dates back at least five hundred years. It measures 2 5/8x9 and has five double sets of brass jingles that are slightly larger than the jingles found on most tambourines. Although the *Riq* is physically the smallest of the three *Redmond* models, the brass jingles make it the heaviest. Because of its small diameter, the head is extremely taut, producing an almost bongo-like sound when played open.

Those experienced in Middle Eastern tambourine techniques will delight in the *Riq's* authenticity. The tight *Fiberskyn 3* head compares favorably with the fishskin heads used on professional riqs in terms of pitch and resistance to humidity. It's an excellent instrument for serious tambourinists and frame drummers, but this instrument is not recommended for the casual user. Because of its weight, one has to have a certain amount of hand strength to manipulate it properly, and the large brass jingles can be difficult to control. List price of the *Redmond Riq* is $67.50.

Far more "user friendly" is the *Lotus Tambourine,* which measures 2 5/8x10, has eight double sets of German silver (nickel) jingles, and is based on the design of a standard orchestral tambourine. The jingles produce the type of sound typical of orchestra models, which is somewhat drier than that found on more commercial models (like those from Rhythm Tech or Ludwig). Inside the shell is a large grip for those who wish to use the tambourine for orchestral shake rolls (or bang it against their thighs in a rock band). The *Lotus Tambourine* responds well to a variety of styles including Middle Eastern as well as Brazilian pandeiro techniques. List price is $105.

The *Tar-rine* is the most radical design. After seeing a 20" tar (a type of frame drum) in Turkey that had three pairs of jingles, Redmond was inspired to create a large tambourine that could be

used in the Tar style. The resulting *Tar-rine* measures 2 5/8x12 and has eight double pairs of German silver jingles. Rather than being spread out evenly around the circumference of the shell, the jingles are grouped in four pairs of two double sets, so that there is "empty" space on the shell for those who wish to rest the instrument upright on their knee, tar style. There is also a tar-like notch cut into the shell to facilitate holding the instrument.

The *Tar-rine* is a delight and is probably the most versatile of the three *Redmond* models. It functions very well as a traditional tambourine, but has a lower pitch that gives it more body. Because of the larger head diameter, it's possible to get subtle pitch-changing effects by pressing against the head with your fingers, and the instrument is adaptable to a variety of styles and techniques. List price is $115.

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NEW! DW 7000 Series

The new 7000 Series Drum Hardware from Drum Workshop has many of the top-of-the-line details you'll find on DW's Heavy-Duty 9000 Series. The Cymbal Stand (7700) has a toothless cymbal tilter with patented cymbal space adjustment, the Snare Stand (7500) has a removable snare basket for consistent set-up and the Hi-Hat (7200) has DW's fluid, fast action. The new 7900 Tom-Tom Stand features the flexibility of interchangeable ball-in-socket arms and a built-in accessory clamp which are also included on the low tom-tom (7901) and single tom and cymbal (7999) stands (not shown). All in all the new 7000 Series is just as tough, durable and versatile as our 9000's with the increased portability and reduced weight that makes them ideal for studios, clubs and one-nighters.

DW 7000 Series Drum Hardware

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The Modern Drummer Library

Applied Rhythms
by Carl Palmer

This book contains transcriptions of ten of Carl Palmer's most famous recordings, and also includes Carl's personal exercises for drumset technique.

The Electronic Drummer
by Norman Weinberg

From simple uses of electronics to complex setups, this book will tell you what you need to know in straightforward, "user-friendly" language.

The Best Of Concepts
by Roy Burns

Practical, informative, and entertaining ideas on dozens of subjects that concern all drummers. Authored by one of MD's most popular columnists.

Master Studies
by Joe Morello

The book on hand development and drumstick control. Master Studies focuses on important aspects of drumming technique.

The Best Of MD: Rock

Everything from linear drumming, playing in odd time signatures, and double bass techniques to hot shuffle beats, effective fills, and Neil Peart's advice on creating a drum solo.

The Great American Drums
by Harry Cangany

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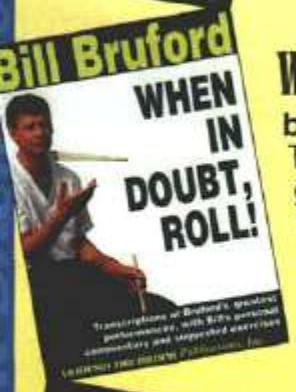

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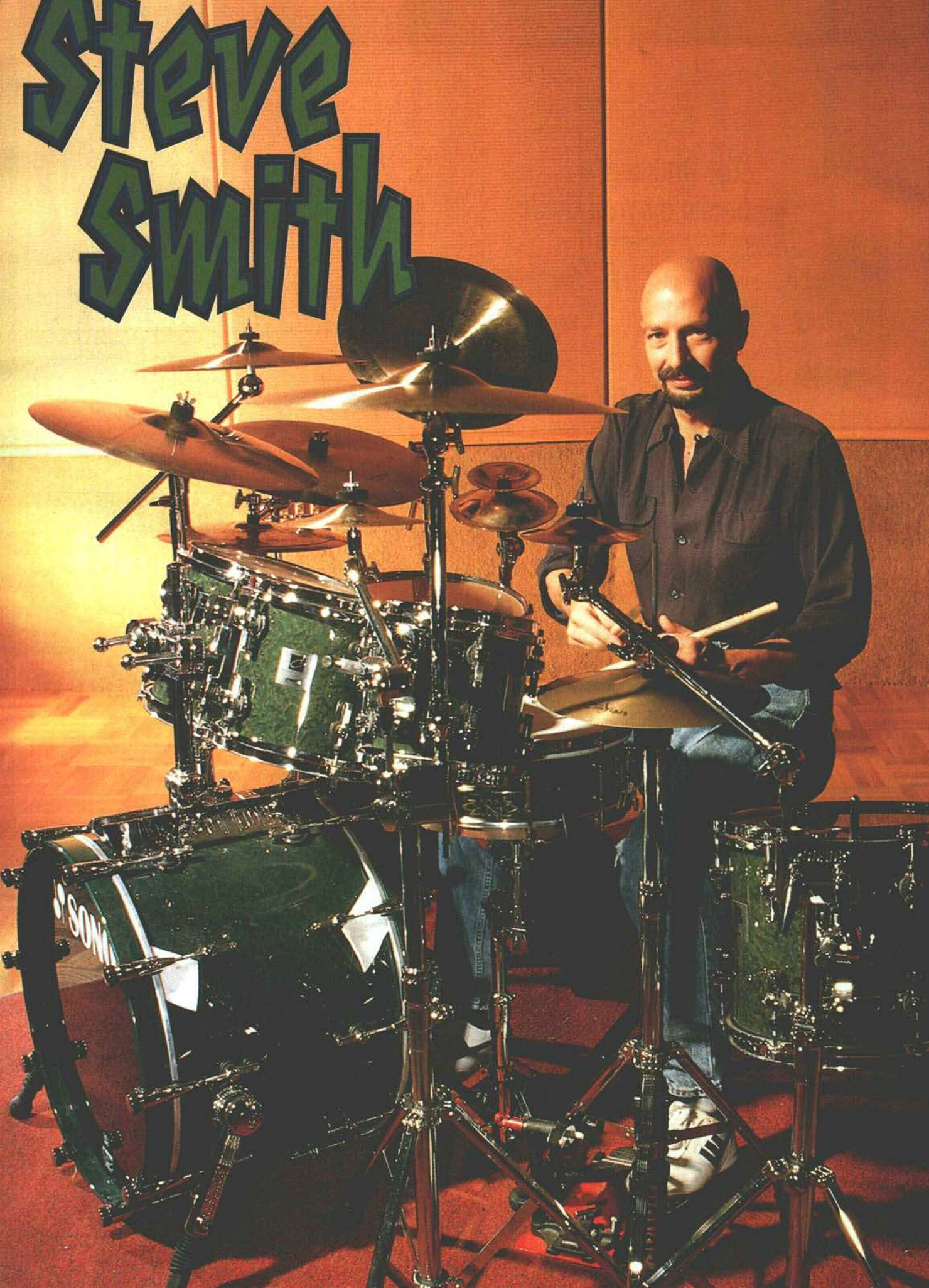
MOD5

Steve Smith



Journey Revisited

by Robyn Flans

photos by Jay Blakesberg

For Journey lovers, 1997 is a landmark year, as one of the best-selling rock bands in history reunites to please audiences with their classic material—as well as songs from their first studio record in ten years, *Trial By Fire*. Reprising his role as Journey drummer is Steve Smith, who joined the band in 1978 and was "let go" in 1985, largely because of musical differences regarding the making of the band's last studio album, *Raised On Radio*. It was no secret that musical and personal dissension had infiltrated the group. Journey disbanded two years later.

The past ten years have been well spent by Steve. He's been incredibly productive, taking part in *many* outstanding projects: seven albums and road work with Vital Information; a seven-year relationship with Steps Ahead; albums with the Storm, Shaw/Blades, Y&T, and Italian artists Zucchero and Franchesco de Gregori; a couple of tracks on Mariah Carey's *Emotion;* Jonathan Cain's and Neal Schon's solo albums; the *Burning For Buddy* project; and tours with Stanley Clarke, Allan Holdsworth, and Randy Brecker. When he's at home in Northern California, Steve enjoys working with local bands, covering a variety of styles such as fusion with Marc Russo, straight-ahead jazz with Mel Graves and Mike Zelber, hip-hop with Alphabet Soup, and blues with a trio called the Russell Brothers.

Despite the fact that all of the members of Journey were busy with projects early in 1995, when Sony proposed that the band reunite, it seemed to make sense to everyone involved. To date, Journey has sold more than forty-five million albums, with *Escape* and *Frontiers* remaining on Sony's Top-10 list of best-selling albums to this day. Journey's multi-platinum *Greatest Hits,* released in 1989, continues to sell more than 500,000 copies per year, making it obvious to group members that there is still an enthusiastic audience out there ready for more.

To Steve, whose larger body of work has been in the jazz field, the reunion is an opportunity to make a good wage replaying a role that he can now infuse with ten more years' worth of musical experience and wisdom. "I do some things that make a lot of money, " he candidly explains. "I do some things that make a fair amount of money. I do some things that make me very little money—and I do some things that *lose* money. But all in all, it's a balanced portfolio...and it feels good."

RF: Are you still practicing like a madman?

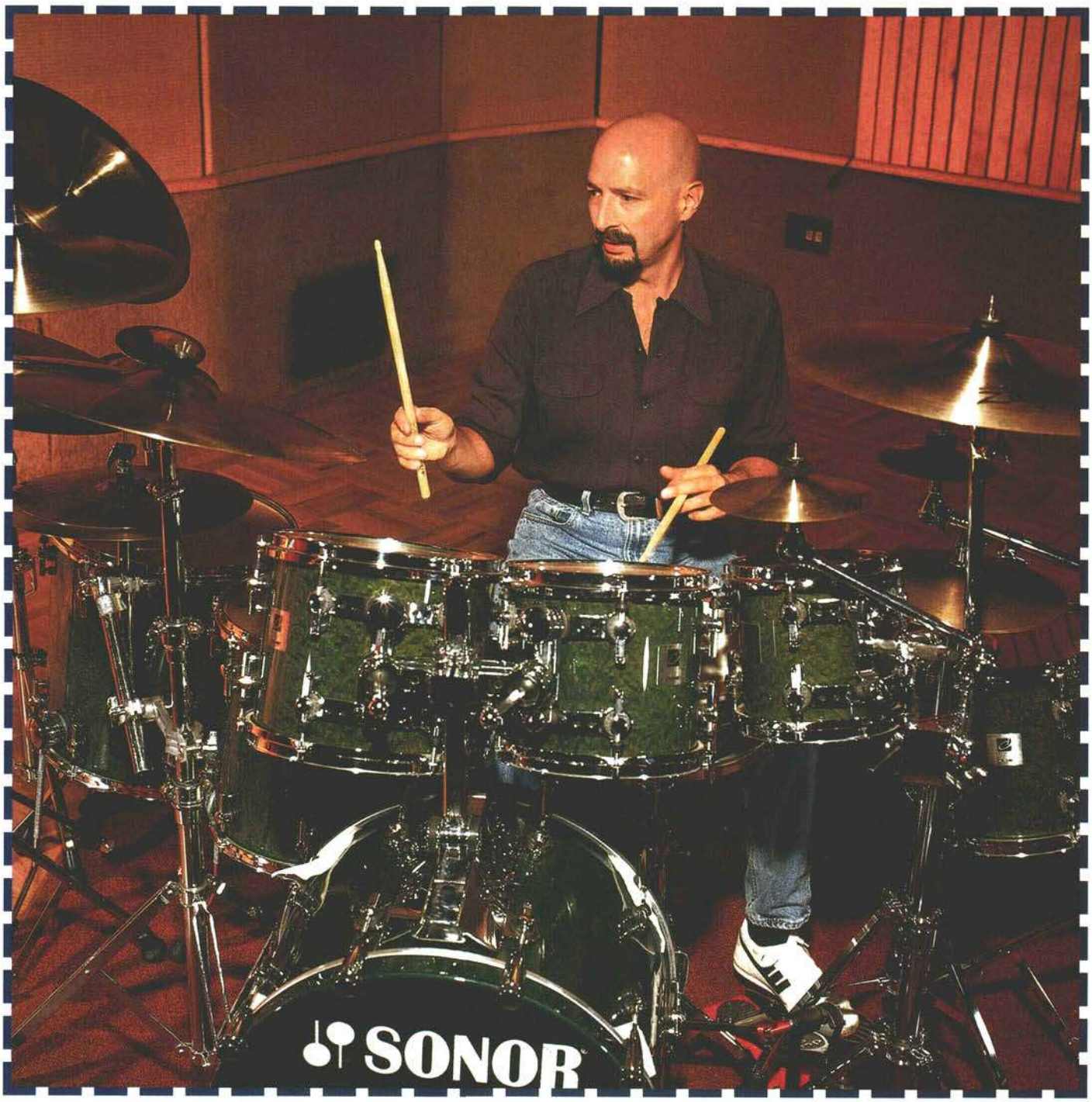
SS: Yes. I really enjoy the practicing process, so part of my day is allocated for that. It's one of the first things I do every morning after I get up and have breakfast. I'm more focused if I do it, say, around 9:00 in the morning.

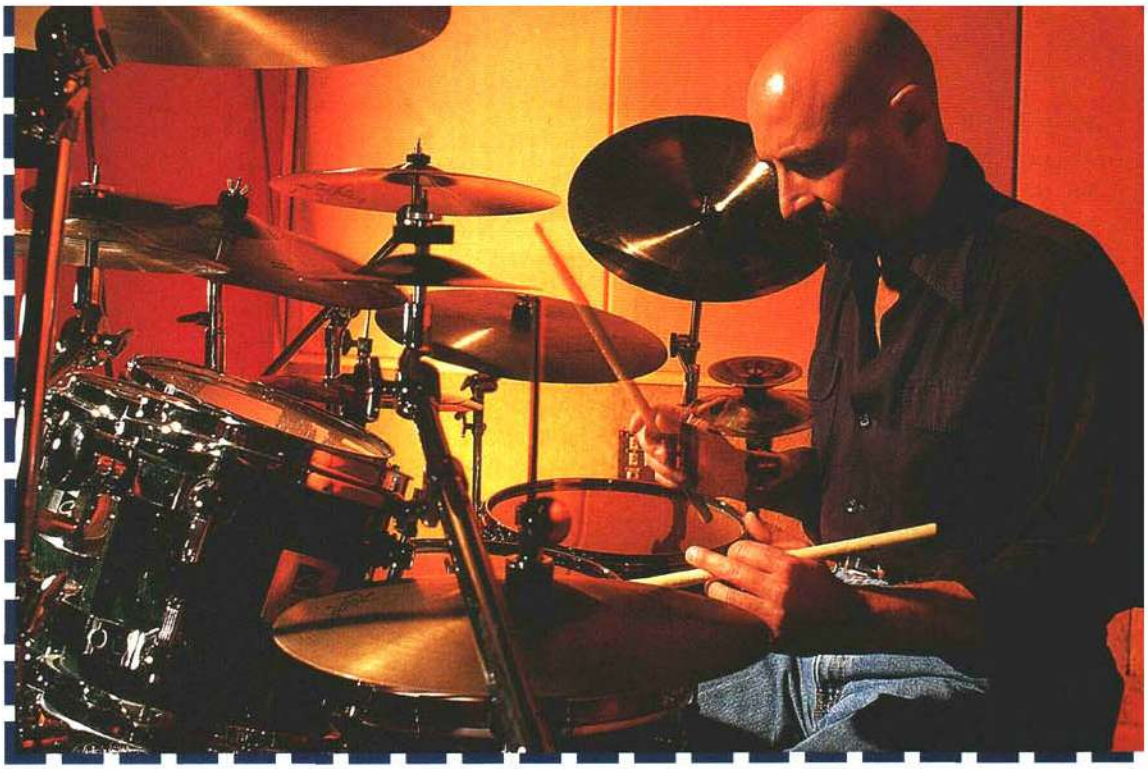
RF: Until?

SS: Maybe noon. I have a lot of great rational reasons for doing it, but the overriding reason is that it feels great; I enjoy it. I see it as part of my job, just like an athlete must stay in training. I don't understand why it's so surprising that I do this. I'm fascinated by the instrument and the music and want to make it easier to play and access more ideas. Also, I feel it is a way for me to help respect, enhance, and develop the potential of the musical gift I was born with.

RF: Can you elaborate on how you are doing that?

"If I'm developing something to a specific degree of proficiency, a lot of times I'll hit some kind of wall. The way to break through that wall is to re-address the foundation."





SS: I'm constantly re-addressing the foundations of what I do.

RF: Can you define "foundations"?

SS: The basic grip I'm using, the motion that my hands are making, and the path that the stick is making as it's moving through space...the basic physics of holding the sticks, sitting at the drumset with the feet on the pedals and a sense of balance and centering.

If I'm developing something to a specific degree of proficiency, a lot of times I'll hit some kind of wall. The way to break through that wall is to re-address the foundation. It really gets down to, What does it feel like when I play? The less I break the laws, the easier it gets. I am becoming more and more aware of the physical laws and trying to align with them rather than resist them.

RF: Let's get specific: Tell us something about your lessons with Freddie Gruber.

SS: One thing that is consistent with the lessons is having everything really settle to the bottom of the beat and having what I play be very grounded and connected to the earth. Otherwise, whatever I play would have a nervous sensation. That's one aspect of it.

RF: What does being grounded require?

SS: It requires that we don't get in the

Steve's Drums

Drumset: Sonor *Designer Series,* with birch toms and maple/birch bass drum

- **A.** snare drum (either a Sonor bronze piccolo or a 1920 Ludwig *Black Beauty)*
- **B.** 11 x 13 tom
- **C.** 8 x 8 tom
- **D.** 9 x 10 tom
- **E.** 10 x 12 tom
- **F.** 16 x 14 floor tom
- **G.** 16 x 16 floor tom
- **H.** 16 x 22 bass drum (Steve uses one bass drum in the studio, two bass drums live)

Cymbals: Zildjian

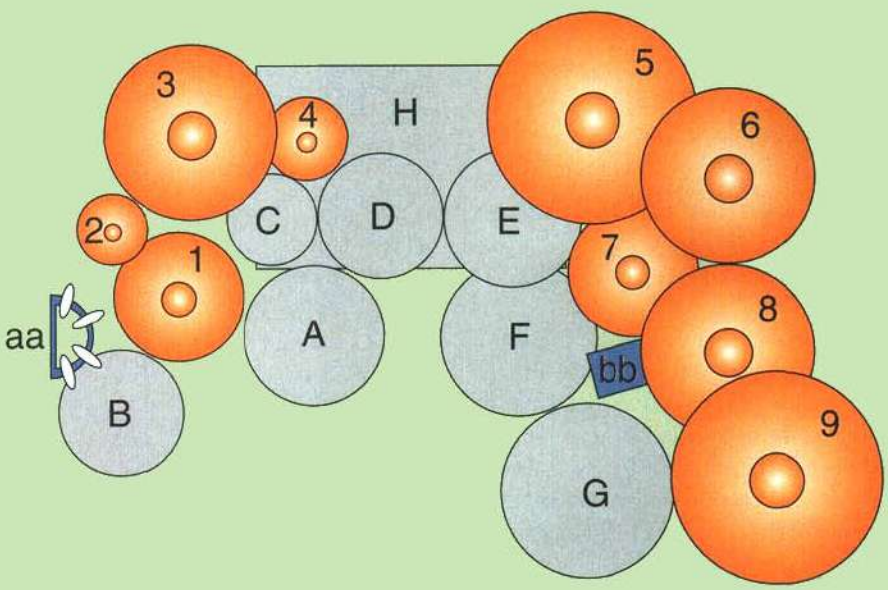
1. 13" K/Z hi-hats (or 12" SR)
2. 6" A splash
3. 18" *A Custom* (or *K Custom Dark)* crash
4. 8" A splash
5. 20" A *Brilliant* medium ride (or 20" or 22" *K Custom)*
6. 18" *A Custom* (or *K Custom Dark)* crash
7. Trash *Hats* (12" on top of 14")
8. 20" *K Flat Top* ride with four rivets
9. 20" *K* China (mounted upside down)

Percussion: LP

aa. mounted tambourine

bb. *Ridge Rider* cowbell

Hardware: All Sonor stands (including hi-hat stand), DW *5000N* double pedal (with nylon straps)

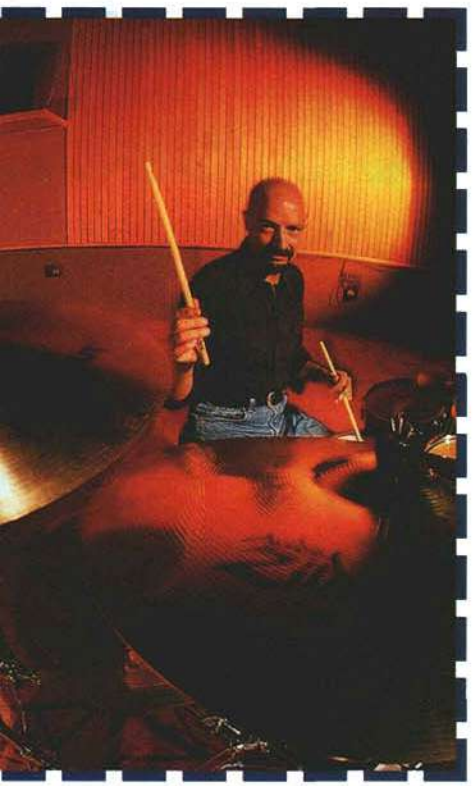


Heads: Remo coated *Ambassador* (or *Diplomat* occasionally) on snare batter, Ambassador or *Diplomat on* snare side, clear *Ambassadors* on toms and bass drum

Sticks: Vic Firth *Steve Smith* signature, Sfeve *Gadd* signature, *Harvey Mason* signature, *Charlie Watts* signature, 7A, and *SD4* models

way of gravity, that I let the sticks and the pedal fall, and allow them to naturally reach the bottom of the beat. I allow the sticks to touch the surface and play off the surface of the drum, but without going *below* the surface of the drum.

A tap dancer will use his toes and heels to float on top of the floor; he's not trying to drive his feet *through* the floor. You don't get anywhere doing that, and you can hurt yourself. That's a common way people play the drums. They don't dance off the *top* of the drum, they play as if what they're striking is inches below the head. It's really important to find out where the surface lies and play off of it.



It's also about being very aware of the motion that happens once the stick hits the drum. How does it travel between one strike to the next strike? That motion in between is important. To draw an analogy to a percussion instrument, let's use the tambourine. As we drop the tambourine and it hits our hand, we hear that as an impact, like the drumstick coming down and hitting the head of the drum. But as we move the tambourine away from the hand, we hear the other side of the beat; we hear the release. With the drumstick we don't hear the release, so we're not often conscious of what the stick is doing in the release. With a tambourine, the release also has to be in time. Both motions must be in time to work. The motion of time and space being equal is the result of respecting the laws.

It's difficult and meticulous work addressing this. And this is just breaking down *one* piece of the puzzle. When I strike the drum, the stick will naturally bounce as long as I don't inhibit that bounce. So I have to move my hand out of the way of the stick to allow it to move through space, and then I have to guide it back down, to start the trip back down and allow gravity to take it back down. I don't want to force any of it. I don't want to lift it up or push it down. I want to facilitate its bounce, and then its rebound, by letting gravity take hold. How my hand moves is really dependent on what dynamic level I'm playing at, and what instrument I'm playing—a cymbal, the snare, a tom-tom, whether I'm moving from the snare to the tom to the cymbal; there are so many variables.

It takes an amazing amount of concentration to slow down the process to the point where it's meditative. I just have to work with microscopic pieces and watch

Drumming Comrades: Peter Erskine & Steve Smith

"I have a long association with Peter," Steve Smith said in an *MD Reflections* article last September. "I first saw him when he was with Stan Kenton when he was eighteen years old; I was the same age. I was completely knocked out with his playing. I attended a Stan Kenton summer camp back then and learned so much from Peter. He was a major influence on me."

Knowing that Smith and Erskine were old friends, we asked Peter if he had any thoughts, comments, or questions he'd like to pose to Steve. He happily volunteered: "Steve, you have made all of us who have known you or followed your career quite proud by your drumming achievements. Your work in the musical, popular, and educational idioms has inspired many drummers. I salute you, old friend, and offer these questions, not only as the 'devil's advocate,' but also as a curious colleague."

Peter: You successfully traverse playing many different styles; how important is it to be able to play more than one type of music?

Steve: In the big picture, it seems to me that I only play *one* type of music—U.S. music. The more familiar I am with the roots of U.S. music—the blues, New Orleans music, swing, big band, bebop, etc.—the easier it is for me to move around between today's different styles, since they all grew from those roots. We need to understand the past in order to play the music of today with depth. To follow that thread, we need to be versed in the styles of today in order to create a music of tomorrow that incorporates and reflects today's world.

Peter: How did your jazz experience help you with the Journey gig?

Steve: My jazz playing is the foundation of my musicianship. When I play the Journey music, I aspire to the same degree of musical integrity necessary to play with great jazz musicians. So the jazz experience has helped by orienting me to think with a jazz musician's mind.

Peter: Conversely, how have you been able to draw upon your Journey experiences when doing other types of music?

Steve: The Journey experience has helped me to *not* always think with the jazz musician's mind! It freed me from some of the limitations of jazz-think. The guys in Journey will sometimes do something or ask me to do something that may not make musical "sense" to me, but it ends up sounding good. I've learned to be able to keep my playing minimal and to the point, and that can be universally applied.

Peter: It is difficult for many players to switch from a loud/hard-hitting playing environment to a quiet/small-group (i.e. jazz) setting. For example, if the complaint or observation is

"There is still some great music being played, and there are musicians coming up with some fresh approaches. But on the whole, I think the fusion era has come to an end as far as its being a vital movement."

Steve and Peter at PASIC '93

made that the drums are "too loud," the drummer responds, "Well, I've been playing a rock gig for the last couple of months...." How important is it to always have all levels of dynamics available in your playing?

Steve: It is important to always have all dynamic levels available, and I have to be constantly vigilant that I don't lose my ability to play soft and with finesse while playing a rock gig. I try to work in a lot of soft-touch, ghost notes in the rock playing. You don't hear most of it, but it gives the drumming more flow, and it can keep my touch relatively intact. I'll also do a fair amount of "damage control" practice to keep my finesse developing.

Conversely, when I know I have a hard-hitting gig coming up, and I haven't been doing that, I'll get ready for it by building up my "big sound" chops.

Peter: I've noticed how excellent your posture at the kit has become in recent years. Why is that, and what purpose does it serve?

Steve: The posture is a result of developing better foot technique. If I do that properly, I sit more centered and stay grounded, which helps the groove. As far as the upper body goes, I had a "drum lesson" from one of your old bosses—Joe Zawinul. He told me I had my right shoulder higher than my left, and that wasn't going to work; I had to be balanced and centered like a boxer. I took his advice and it has improved my feel and my movement around the kit.

Peter: What do you listen to while you're playing?

Steve: My listening focus will first be on the rhythm section, connecting with the bass and then the keyboards and/or guitar. Then my focus will go to the soloist so I'm supportive and responsive to where he is going. Basically I want to hear everyone. In most live situations I try to either use no monitor or as little monitor as possible. Usually I have no drums in the monitors, but occasionally I'll have a little bass drum so I can feel it.

Peter: What about hearing protection?

Steve: I got into hearing protection too late, and I have lost some of my high end and have tinnitus. I always use the molded earplugs when practicing, playing with Journey, or doing any loud gig. Gordy Knudtson has some great headphones [GK] for practicing that really cut down the volume of the drums so you don't need to turn up the level of the music in the phones. I also use them in the studio all the time now.

Peter: Which outside activities have contributed to your drumming (exercise, meditation, going for walks, reading, kids, etc.)?

Steve: Raising children, experiencing the vicissitudes of marriage and divorce, developing a relationship with my partner Diane, all contribute to my personal growth, which is reflected in my musicianship. I do keep limber with some yoga stretches and massage. I do some moderate exercise, which keeps my body in shape. I try to stay inspired and fresh by listening to or reading Thich Nhat Hanh, Marianne Williamson, Deepak Chopra, and many others. Therapy, journalizing, and meditating are also important to keep me processing life's input.

Peter: How important is it to be able to read music?

Steve: Reading music has helped me in many ways, so I think it is important. I probably learn and play at least one hundred new pieces of music each year. I couldn't do it if I had to rely only on my memory. Reading music makes that work so much easier. I can relax and focus on the playing. For the musicians who speak that language, it's an important form of communication. I'm glad I can participate in that dialog.

Peter: Who have been some of the more interesting people you've worked with? Best boss? Worst?

Steve: Ahmad Jamal was very interesting. He had a few hand signals I had to learn, and he would spontaneously create different arrangements night after night. I had to watch him like a hawk so I wouldn't miss one of these subtle cues—go to the bridge, to the top, solo section, lay out.... The music was loose and a lot of fun.

Mariah Carey was interesting because she is such a total babe! I was a total fan.

I always enjoy working with another one of your old bosses, Mike Mainieri. I think he's a great boss. He has a concept, but he remains open and allows the band to take on its own life.

Worst boss? Producer Beau Hill. I had a good experience with him on a Dweezil Zappa record, but on the Storm record I did, despite my numerous protests, he triggered samples on all of my drums, which destroyed the sound. It removed any trace of nuance, dynamics, and feel, not to mention the misfirings that occurred, or the complete *omission* of some fills or beats I played. A very unrewarding experience.

A producer I really enjoy working with is Corrado Rustici. He produces artists like Zucchero and Franchesco de Gregori in Italy, and the work is very musical and interesting. I love the way he combines loops and my live drums to create a complex hybrid of sound and groove.

Peter: What kind of drumstick do you use?

Steve: Great question! I use my custom-designed, signature-model Vic Firth sticks most of the time. On some of the songs on *Trial By Fire,* I used the *Steve Gadd* or *Harvey Mason* models. I also like the Vic Firth *7A* for some lighter playing.

Peter: And, finally: Now that a great many others have adopted the shaved head/goatee look, whaddya gonna do?

Steve: I'm going to kidnap you and send you to my barber! •

and adjust my body to the point where I'm just breathing and relaxing. Eventually, when the motions are developed and I get out of the way, it starts to play itself.

Every time I go to Fred Gruber to take a lesson—every four to six months—I'll get a piece and develop it. After I've developed that, there will be even *more* detail to take it a step further: How can I make it easier and lighter? What I mean by lighter is, when you have less and less resistance, there is actually a physical sensation of the stick being lighter, almost weightless—though the sound

that comes out can be bigger and stronger-sounding, yet without the effort that I expended, say, ten years ago. That's the analytical practice stage, but when I play the drums in performance, I pay less attention to the mechanics of it because I've spent the time in practice, so it's easier for me to play and it's more of a creative experience.

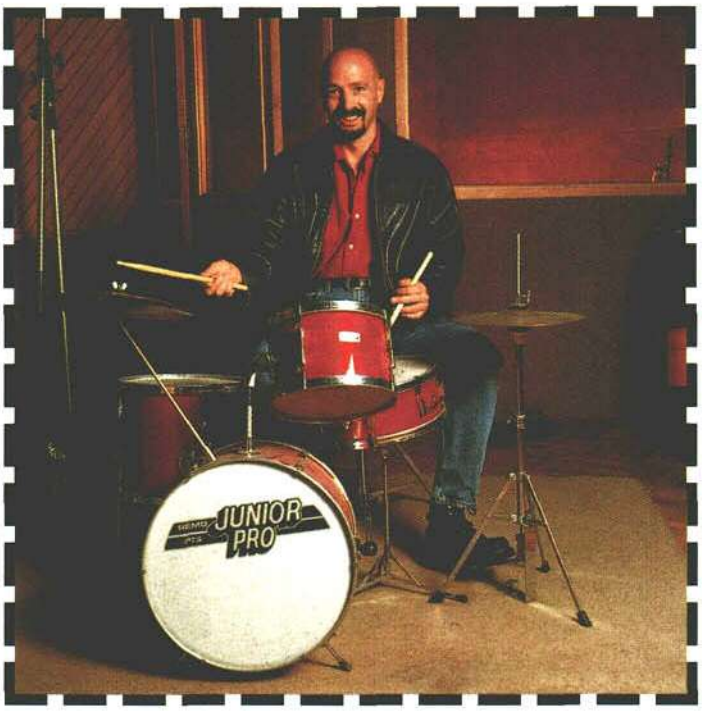
I feel a new sense of balance and grounding—sensing the bottom of the beat, sensing my body movement on the drumset with increased ease. I've discovered that I don't often break sticks or cymbals. I occasionally dent drumheads, and they wear out, but not quickly. I

changed the upper tom heads once during the whole tracking sessions for the Journey record. It's because of touch. The sticks wear out eventually, but I notice that without forcing things, I'm not breaking them—which brings up the subject of common injuries. When you're using tension, something has to give. Hopefully your arm will not break; the stick will break first, the cymbal will break first. But usually, your body has already taken quite a beating.

RF: Certainly this is applicable to the Vital Information situation, but what about the dynamics and power in the Journey situation?

SS: There may be a misconception that what I'm talking about can only work in a soft context, but that's not the case. Buddy Rich is such a great example of somebody who embodied all of this. That was one of the reasons he was such a technically accomplished player. Buddy didn't break the laws; he was aligned with them, which explains a lot of his facility. But he was capable of playing incredibly loud. You can utilize all of these principles with a full range of dynamics.

I'm finding the Journey situation very comfortable—in fact, it's easier than it used to be. I have just as big a sound as I used to have, but I would have had to play with a lot more force to fill up the same space with sound.



RF: There was a ten-year absence of playing in that group. You're ten years older, more musically mature, more studied, more experienced, and now you're going back in a situation from your past. Did you need to redevelop certain techniques you used back then because that's what worked, or can you truly apply your maturity to a situation you were in ten years ago?

SS: When I realized this reunion was inevitable, I decided to really do my homework on rock 'n' roll. When I first joined the band in '78, I was coming from more of a jazz background, with pretty limited rock 'n' roll knowledge. I knew of the groups of the '60s, like Hendrix, Cream, and Led Zeppelin, but I had never done any major

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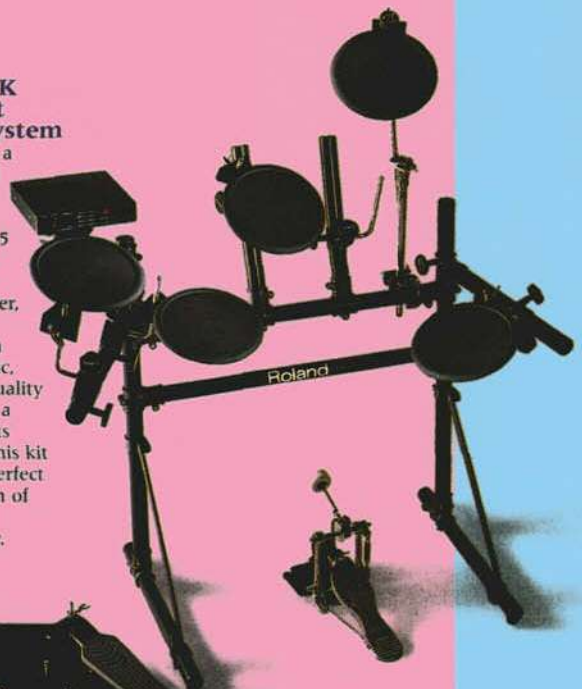

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research on rock 'n' roll history. I *had* done that with jazz.

In the last few years, I really traced the rock roots of the instrument, the music, and all the different players. When I first joined Journey, I played the music *intuitively.* I was sort of a toned-down fusion drummer at the time. But for this reunion, I decided to approach the music from a completely different perspective, more from the roots of rock 'n' roll.

In my researching the history of the drumset I decided to go back and try to find the point where the music began to diverge from jazz. The instrument itself was basically designed to play jazz. If you were a drummer before a certain time, you were pretty much a jazz drummer. Eventually they used the drumset to play the blues. I tried to find the point where the blues started to evolve into the early rock 'n' roll feels. I read books, bought videos and a lot of biographies and histories of rock 'n' roll, and then went out and tried to find the recordings to accompany all of that. I enjoyed it. This is my work. If you talk to somebody who writes a book, they do research before they start writing, so this

was no different.

I really dug into the whole blues thing and found as many of the earliest recordings as I could. Most of them have no drums, and some of them have a washboard. Then eventually, there are drums. Louis Jordan & the Tympany Five were called jump blues, but they're credited for creating some of the early rock 'n' roll. Jordan had a drummer named Shadow Wilson, who was a great jazz drummer. Some of the other early breakthrough guys

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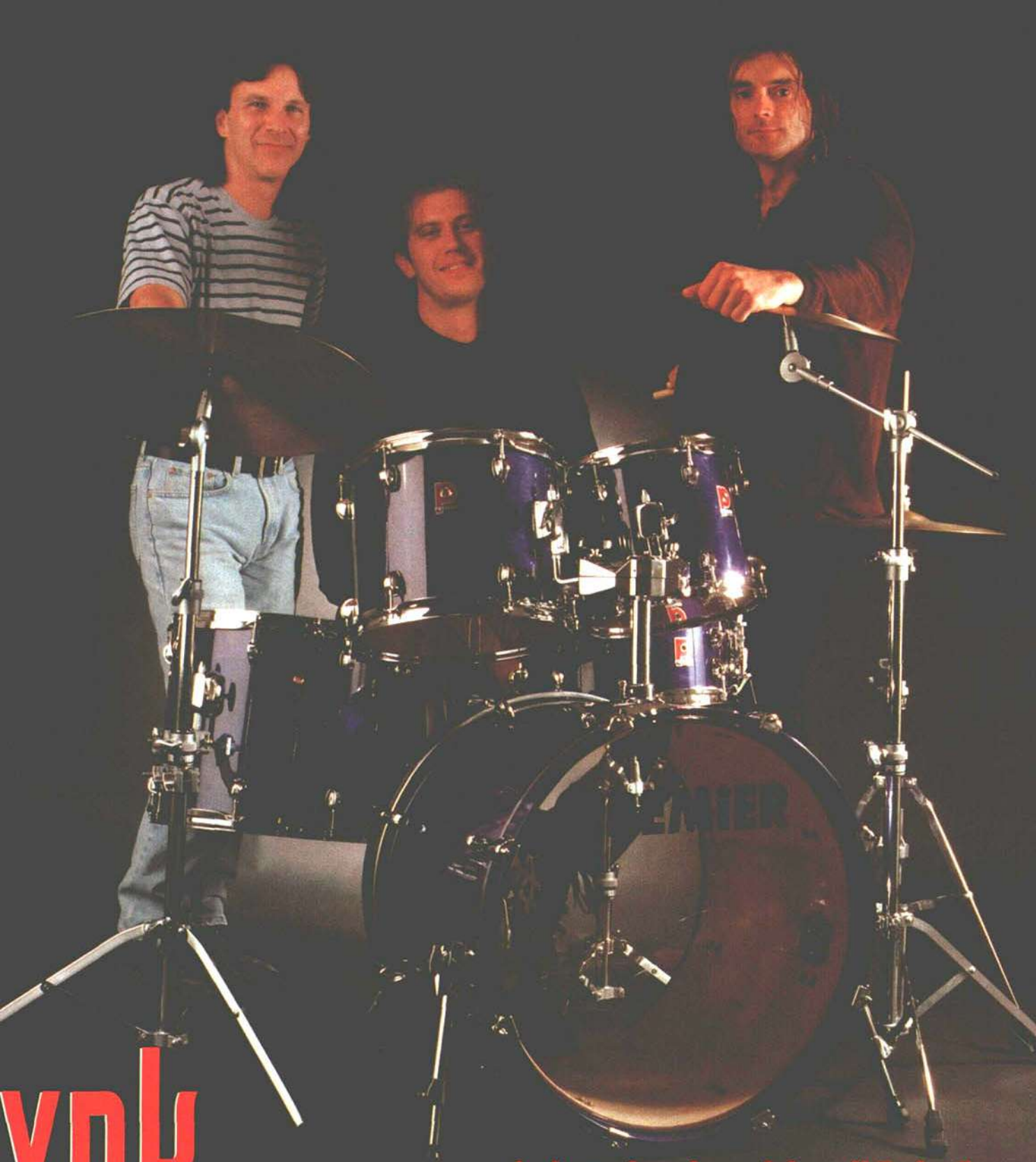

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Playing With Fire

These are the albums that Steve says best represent his drumming.

Artist	Album Title
Journey	Trial By Fire
Vital Information	Ray Of Hope
Zucchero	Spirite Di Vino
Steps Ahead	N.Y.C.
Steps Ahead	Yin-Yang
Steps Ahead	Live In Tokyo '86
Kit Walker	Fire In The Lake
Michael Manring	Thonk

And here are the albums Steve has been listening to lately for inspiration.

Artist	Album Title	Drummer
Keith Jarrett	At The Deer Head Inn	Paul Motian
Little Village	Little Village	Jim Keltner
Sam Cooke	Sam Cooke's Night Beat	Hal Blaine/Edward J. Hall
Little Richard	The Georgia Peach	Earl Palmer/Charles Connor
Miles Davis	The Complete Live At The Plugged Nickel '65	Tony Williams
The Meters	Uptown Rulers	Zigaboo Modeliste
Steve Coleman	Curves Of Life	Gene Lake
Larry Young	Unity	Elvin Jones

were Little Richard, Fats Domino, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Elvis Presley, and I listened to original recordings and checked out what their drummers were playing, and then found the common threads.

Earl Palmer was somebody who really came up as a strong influence as far as all this goes, because most of the early rock stuff came from New Orleans. He was the session player on many of the records coming from there. There's a DCI collection called *New Orleans Drummers,* and I thought his part was fantastic. I learned a lot about the earliest rock 'n' roll feels from listening and watching him play.

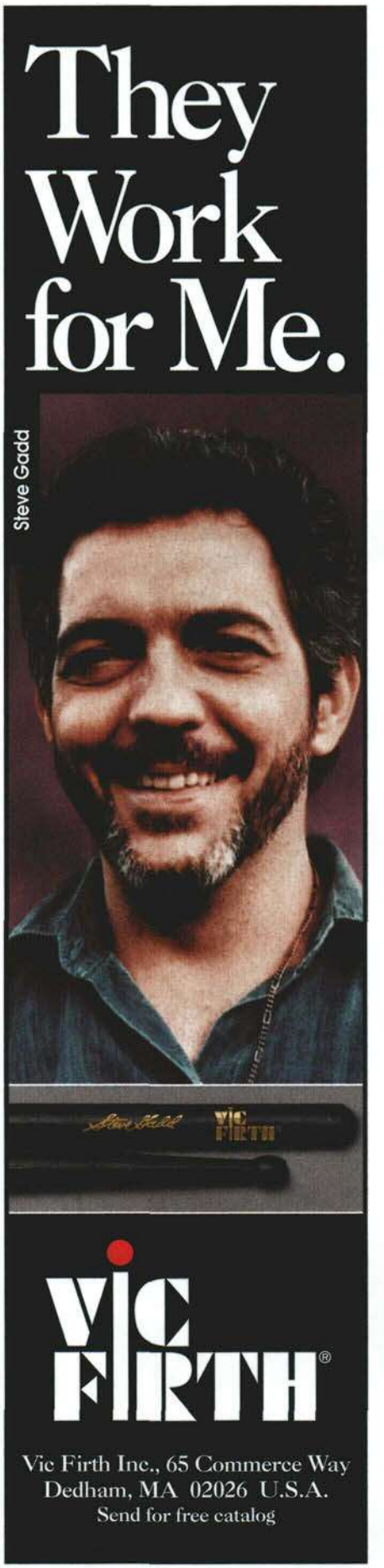
What struck me was that nearly all of the early rock drummers were basically jazz drummers who, while doing the studio work, had to come up with parts to fit the new music being played. Thus, rock drumming was born. The one thread I heard with most of the first-generation rockers was that they swung like crazy. It was coming out of swing, it was coming out of a shuffle. If you listen to Little Richard or Fats Domino, it's not an even 8th-note feel for the most part. It's a shuffle type of feel, a *swinging, swampy* feel, which Jim Keltner so embodies and has kept alive through the years.

The whole British Invasion had to base their music on something, and this is pretty much what they based it on. Rather than going to John Bonham and Ringo, which is legitimate—and I did readdress all that—I wanted to hear where *they* got their stuff from. From what it sounds like to me, they got their influences mostly from jazz drummers like Max Roach, Art Blakey, Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones, Buddy Rich, and Gene Krupa, and then the work of Earl Palmer and his contemporaries. When I listen to those early English drummers, they have this great swing as well.

The further we get from the source, the further drummers move away from their orientation of the instrument being based in the 4/4 swing pulse, or at least the shuffle. Consequently, we're further removed from the essence of a grooving, swinging, downhome funky rock feel.

I did personal examinations of the different musicians I knew who were influential to Steve Perry, Neal Schon, and Jonathan Cain. I know Steve's major influence is Sam Cooke, so I read his biography and I had a sense of where he came from with his gospel roots. I bought many of his recordings, which encompassed all of his different periods. Jackie Wilson is also a big influence on Steve, as well as many of the great soul singers of the '60s. I bought Motown collections—Wilson Pickett, Marvin Gaye, and Otis Redding, to name a few.

I wanted it to be that when I walked into the rehearsal hall with Journey, it would be different from before. Like when Steve would talk about this Sam Cooke tune or the feel of this Motown hit—back then, if he gave me a hint of what it was about, I could fake it; I could come up with a good



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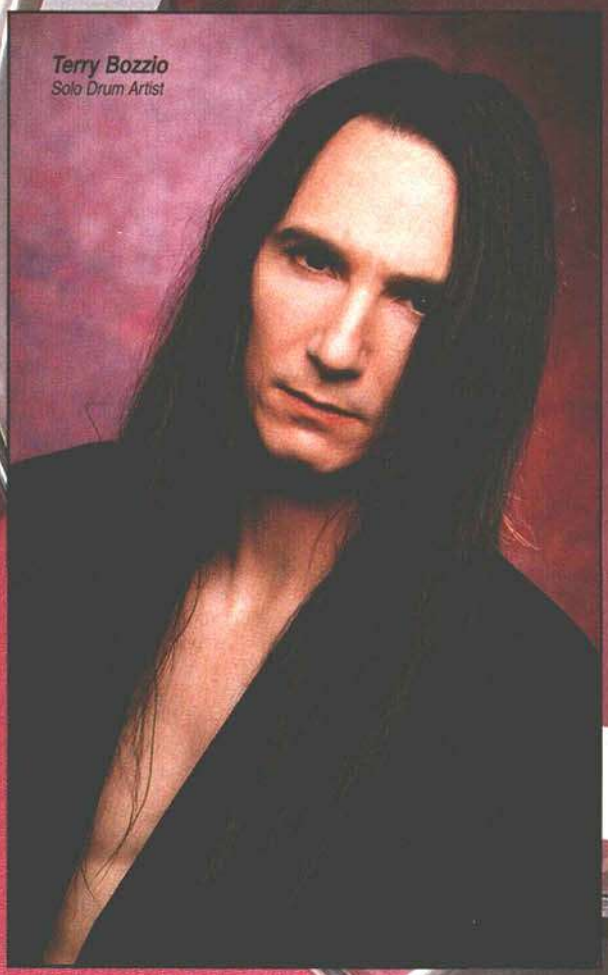

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approximation and something intuitively that worked. But now I was coming at it more from having firsthand knowledge of what it was he was listening to. It was easier for us to connect musically.

It was always easier for me to connect with Neal, with his heavy background in blues and then Eric Clapton and Hendrix and the whole '60s guitar thing, because I was pretty familiar with it. But I went back even further to check out Neal's blues roots. It was an interesting period of months where I was listening and reading. I'd then try to play along with the records and try to cop the feel, getting right back to how I practiced when I was a kid. I also went out and played gigs with some of the local San Francisco players. This way I could embody it, feel it, and develop it, so I could play it whenever it was appropriate. It gave me the feeling that I could enjoy this Journey reunion and get something out of it in a musical way.

RF: How do you see your evolution of the last ten years, and what do you see that you're bringing to the music, aside from the studying?

SS: I've had a lot of studio experience in the last ten years, so I have a lot of newly developed skills in "song drumming." I have a lot of technical awareness of the studio environment and playing with click tracks, sequencers, loops, and all of the modern technology, which I didn't have *any* knowledge of when I had originally joined the band. That was a lot of experience for me to bring to the situation.

Something new I brought to the reunion was a sense of detachment from the "band experience." Before, the band was incredibly important to me and the outlet was really crucial in that I wanted to demonstrate everything I knew, my ability and knowledge—and I was trying to squeeze everything in, which can cause a lot of tension. In some ways it can create some great music, and there's something to be said for that. But behind that, there was also somewhat of a lack of awareness of what might be the most appropriate thing to play. Now I just cut to the chase without taking some unnecessary, circuitous route. Having a lot of experience as a hired hand now, I do what the people who hire me want, and there are boundaries to be creative within, which is the challenge. So I take the challenge and if they like it, great, and if they don't, I'm not attached to it; I'm just there to do my job. I've learned something through the experience, but I'm not attached to it. I approached this situation with that sense of professionalism and objectivity.

RF: Having done a lot of session projects, you probably came back to this situation with more confidence.

SS: Yes. I had the confidence to know I could do a good job and to know I have worked with very demanding people who have been very satisfied with my work. I went into this situation with that attitude.

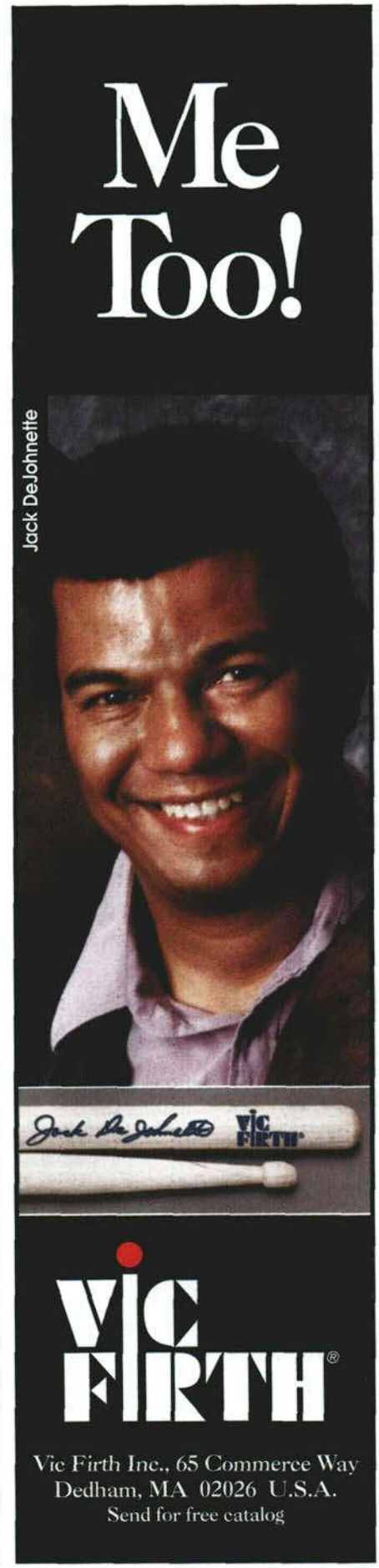
RF: In the early days the creation of the music was a band process. When Journey recorded *Raised On Radio* in 1985 it was much less that way. How was the new material put together?

SS: It was a combination of approaches. A normal working day would be 11:00 to 5:00, five days a week, like a regular day gig. We would jam and come up with song ideas and nurture them to completion. We pretty consistently created one song a day for a couple of months. That would result in a pretty good song form—verse, chorus, bridge, with an arrangement and some melody, although no lyrics. Then we would make a rough demo with a couple of mic's in the room.

The other approach taken was that Jon, Neal, and Steve, or just a couple of them, would go to Jon's house and sketch out some song ideas. What they did differently from the *Raised On Radio* project, except for two tunes, was they didn't use a drum computer or synth bass, which was really nice. They just left it open, so when Ross [Valory] and I came in, we could take their ideas and put ourselves into it. They had the knowledge that there was something of value in that spark of chemistry and creativity that happens with the five of us in the room. That felt great.

After a few months of this, we had around thirty songs in various stages of completion. Then we tried to hone down the best of those because the lyric and final melody writing was rather painstaking for Jon and Steve, and they didn't want to do it if it was unnecessary. We got it down to eighteen songs, and they completed them. We ended up choosing sixteen to record.

By the time producer Kevin Shirley showed up, we were ready to record—or so we thought. He took a different approach and wanted us to rehearse. All of us had



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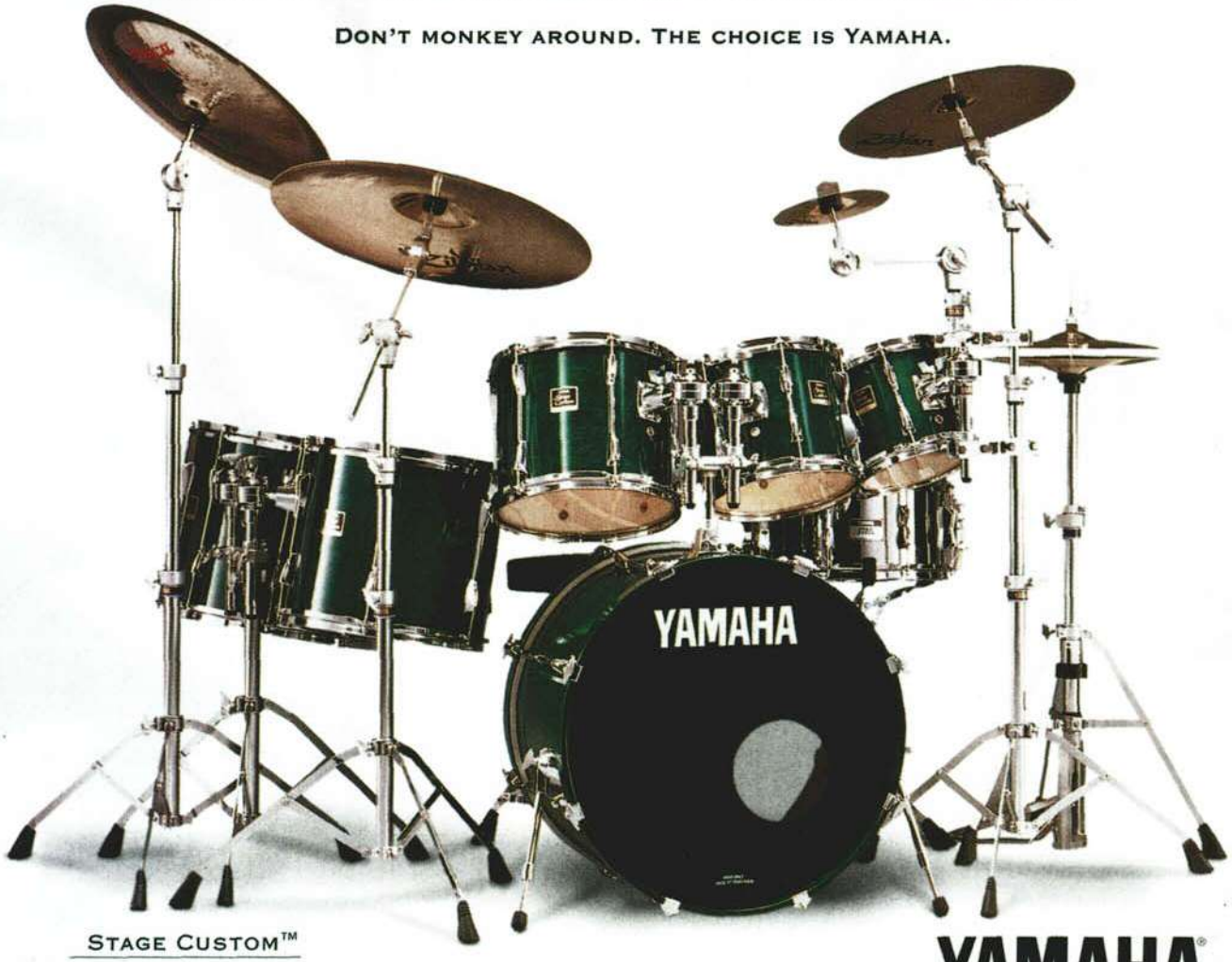

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done a lot of studio work while we were apart, and everyone was comfortable with the idea of going into the studio with a pretty good idea of what the song was and focusing on that one song and cutting it. If we had to play through the sixteen songs, we really didn't know them. We knew them that one day, but without listening to the demo, we had completely forgotten them. I would write out a sketch of a chart as it went by, so I had my music to refer to, but I didn't have it memorized. He wanted us to rehearse the stuff like we were a young band and get the music to the point where we had it just about memorized and could perform all the songs like a set. That is something we used to do way back when, but we didn't want to do it this time. So there was a lot of grumbling, but we did it. We spent three weeks rehearsing the songs that had already been written.

RF: Was there value in that?

SS: Yes, it turned out to be good. We got to the point where we honed the songs even more than they were, and we got very comfortable with them. So by the time we went into the studio, we were going for magical takes, rather than trying to learn the song and *then* trying to get the magical take. We only had to do maybe three takes per song, so there was a lot of energy and spontaneity in the performance.

We did play everything as a band. We used a click track on everything, which was almost more at my insistence than anybody else's. I feel very comfortable with a click track, and it makes it easier for me; I think of it as a ruler with which I'm trying to draw a straight line across a page. We cut everything live with vocals and guitar solos, and I'd say a lot of the guitar solos ended up being live. We kept almost everything. Occasionally we would splice a verse from one take or a chorus from another take, but that felt better to us than doing it with a computer. Kevin Shirley was trying to capture what he felt was the essence of the band—sometimes against what we wanted to do. But he got his way, and he did a great job producing us.

RF: What things did you resist?

SS: The title track, "Trial By Fire," was written to a drum loop, and the guys were saying, "Let's just cut it to the drum loop, and then Steve can overdub the drums to it." I was fine with that because I've done that hundreds of times. Kevin said no, so we learned the song, rehearsed it, and I imitated the drum loop, but did my thing to it, and it came out better. He really pushed the band toward the live performance thing.

Kevin is a very strong personality, and we needed that. Also, he's a musician, and it's the first time we had a producer who wasn't just an engineer/producer. He has *musical* knowledge, and he's a great engineer, so he got into suggesting different chords and different arrangements, but from a more musical perspective than in the past.

RF: It was probably good to have one ringleader to whom you had to defer.

SS: Right. It took the pressure off of us to always have to fight it out amongst the five of us. He earned his money. One of the things he did that I was really happy about was insist on there not being fadeouts on the record. Most of the songs really didn't have endings, and we were just going to fade. When it came time to cut the track, we'd goof around a little at the end and have some fun. Thankfully, we created some endings very spontaneously. Some of the endings were kinda wild and nuts, and he ended up leaving everything.

RF: Let's talk about some of the specific tracks that might have been more creative or challenging.

SS: "Message Of Love" reminded me somewhat of the drumming I did on "Separate Ways." I came up with what fit for that particular song, but it has a breakdown in the middle and drum fills. That one had a particularly exciting fade-out on it, which Kevin kept. That was an exciting tune to play.

On "One More," I really got into the sound of this new Zildjian cymbal combination called *Trash Hats.* There's a little 14" China cymbal on the bottom and a 12" top cymbal. It has a really nasty, trashy hi-hat type of sound. I put them up and played hip-hop feels, which really works well. I also used that sound on "Colors Of The Spirit," which has a sort of slowed-down hip-hop type of groove with a slight swing to it. I used the *Trash Hats* in the chorus, and it has a nice feel to it.

"Castles Burning" was a fun track because it's reminiscent of Hendrix and a Band Of Gypsys kind of feel, a sort of Buddy Miles or Greg Errico [Sly & the Family Stone] type of feel to it. It's got a little hip-hop breakdown in the middle. That one was really fun and exciting to

play. At the fade of that one, there's a funky double bass groove I play. You can't hear it too well in the mix, but it was a little groove that Tim Alexander showed me when we hung out one day. He's got some really nice double bass stuff.

Then there are a few of the typical Journey ballad tunes on the record, which I just did my treatment to—that ballad thing. Something different I used on this record from any of the other records was my Zildjian flat cymbal. I have a nice 20" *K Flat Top* ride with four rivets in it. I'd bring different things to rehearsal, not knowing what the reaction would be. Who would have guessed? Everyone loved the sound, so instead of playing the hi-hat for the verse on some of those ballads, I played that flat sizzle cymbal.

RF: Listening to the album, I was hearing a little more of a jazz approach. That may account for it.

SS: Yes, that might have been the jazz sort of sound. It's mellow, it has a flow; it's not jagged, it's smooth. I used that on quite a few of the tunes. I also used an LP tambourine mounted to my left on some of the songs for a backbeat. I did that on "When You Love A Woman" and "Forever In Blue."

RF: What about the double bass?

SS: I used the double pedal in the studio, although I'll probably use the two bass drums on the tour. The double pedal records well, so I used that on "One More," "Can't Tame The Lion," "Castles Burning," and "I Can See It In Your Eyes," which is only on the Japanese and European release.

One other one I'd like to mention is "It's Just The Rain," which I love the mood on. That one was written to a drum loop, and the part I'm playing is almost identical to what the drum loop played. "Trial By Fire" was also a drum loop song. It's sort of a reggae tune that's hidden at the end of the record. It was a tune that we demoed early on in the process, and it had a blues shuffle feeling. We were fooling around with it one day and played it as a reggae tune, and Kevin really loved it, so we ended up recording it as a reggae tune.

RF: You've become very proficient with traditional grip. Did you ever feel you wanted to use matched grip on the new

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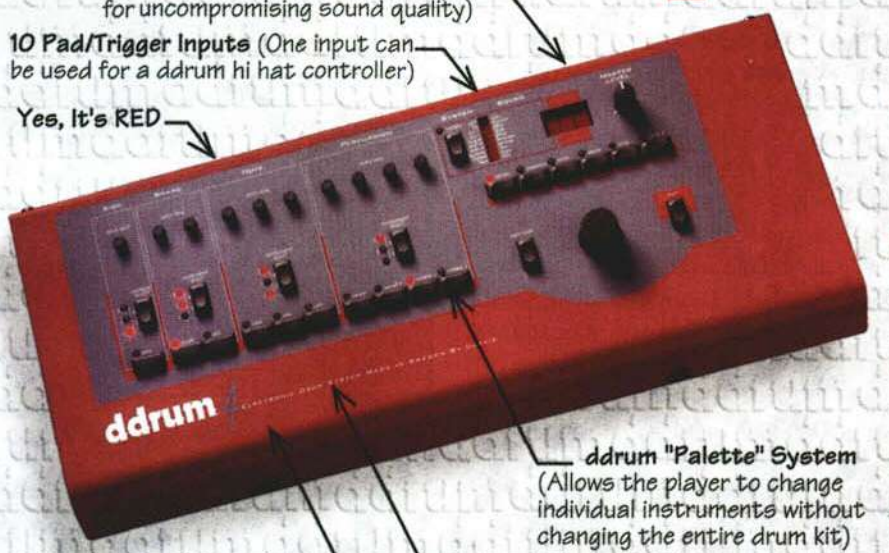

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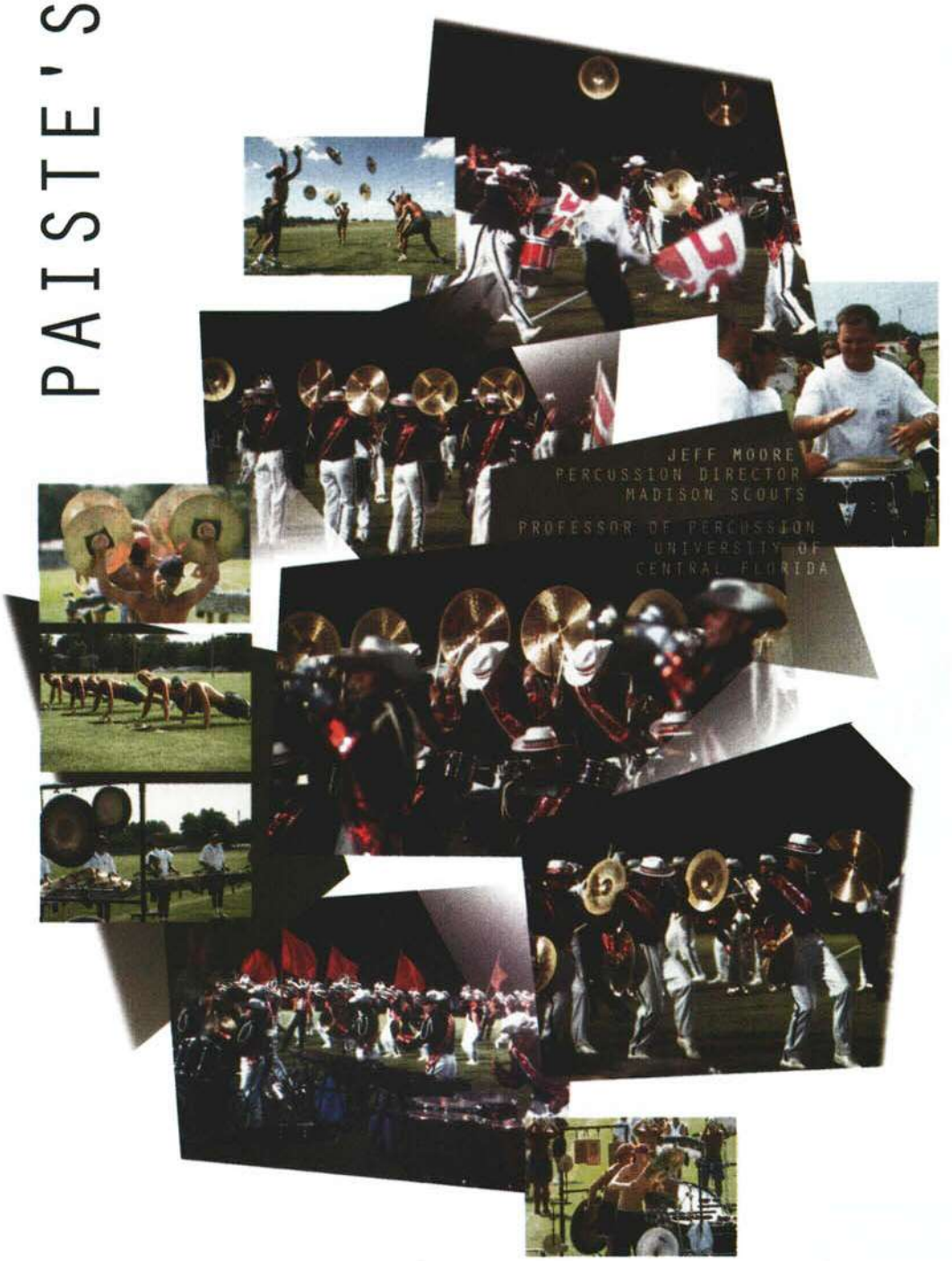

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Journey record, and what will you do live?

SS: On this record I played most of the tunes with traditional grip, but I played a few of the tunes matched grip as well. With me it depends on what feels right for the song.

RF: It's not about power for you?

SS: No, it's a feel thing. "I Can See It In Your Eyes," which is not on the U.S. record, was a matched-grip tune. The drum part was reminiscent of the Led Zeppelin song "Rock And Roll." I could just get more of the feeling I wanted with matched grip. "It's Just The Rain," which is more of a ballad, for some reason felt better matched grip. On "Trial By Fire" I used *Hot Rods* and matched grip. In "Still She Cries," I used a stick in my right hand and an *Ed Thigpen* brush in my left hand. "If He Should Break Your Heart" was half and half. The first half of the tune was all matched grip, and then as we reached the fade-out I went to traditional grip.

It's technically easier for me to play traditional grip; I feel more at home. But there is something to be said for the matched grip for a feel. One of the points of all the facility is to have choices. Each angle and each approach has a particular feel, so therein lies the decision. If you think of it in terms of different periods of the development of music, there were particular approaches to the drumset, technically, that worked. So in some ways to get a more authentic feel to certain roots of a musical sound, even physically approaching it in relation to the grip will help access that feel.

If I'm playing a backbeat on a particular song, I'll play traditional grip differently from the way I do when I'm playing straight-ahead swing. For swing, I'll have my hand up a bit higher on the stick. With more of an angle, you can get a lighter sound. For more of a rock sound with the traditional grip, the stick will be more parallel to the head so you get the rim and the full bead of the stick on the head.

RF: How did the group get back together, and what was it like playing together for the first time?

SS: As far as I can tell, how we got back together started with Columbia first working towards reuniting Steve with Jonathan and Neal, and then including Ross and me in the mix. It was difficult to get it off the ground initially. Steve was happy doing a solo project, as were the other guys.

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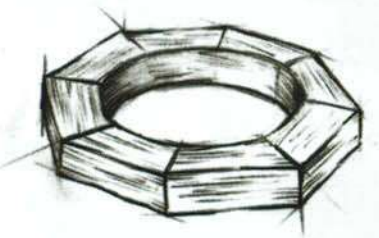

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Eventually Steve got interested, and he really was the crucial piece. The rest of us had had some dialog about whether we'd be interested in doing something like this if the opportunity arose. The other members were into it. When he consented to get together with everybody, we went into a rehearsal hall in L.A. and just played.

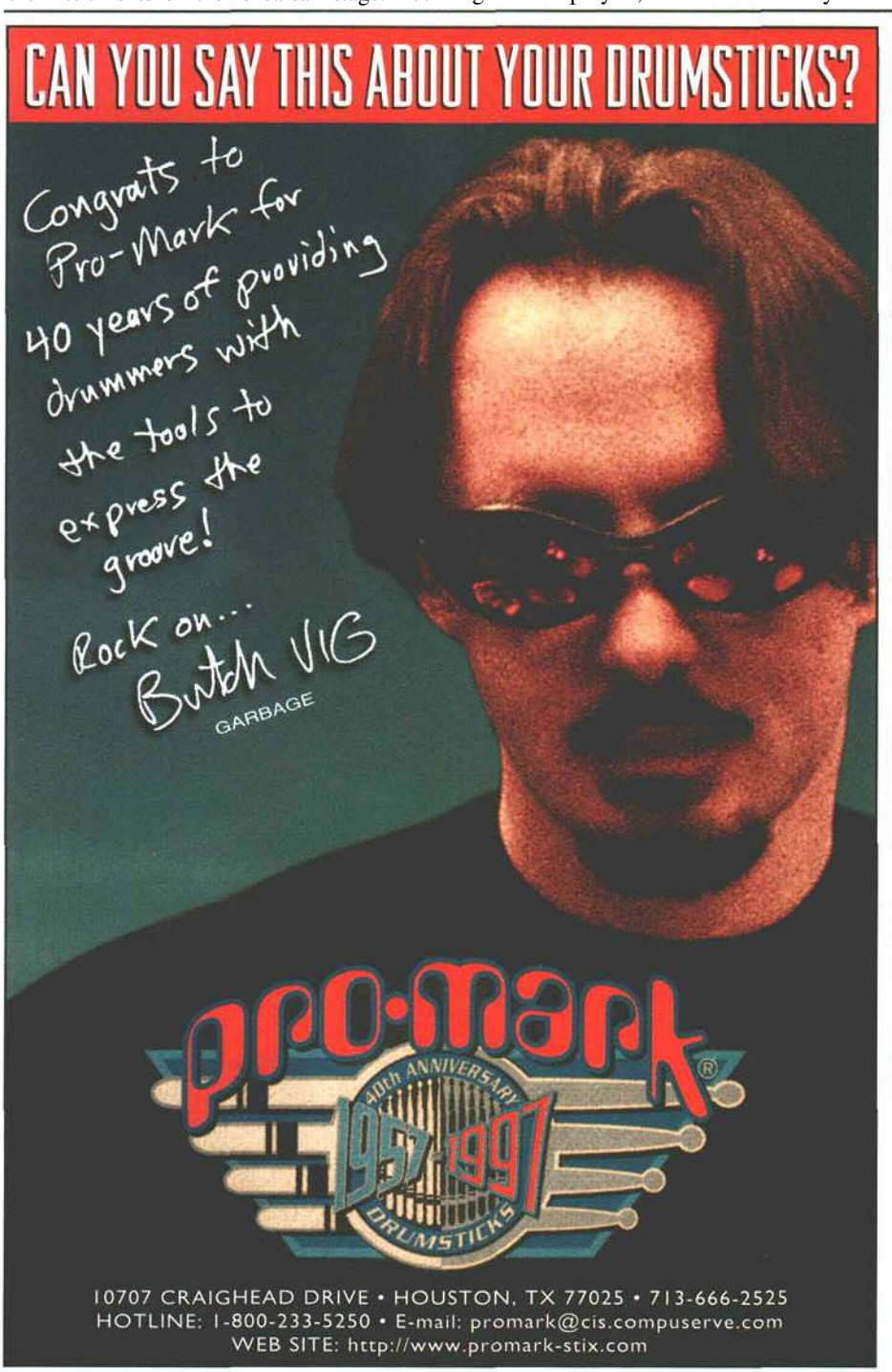
Actually, the story there was that we were *supposed* to play on a particular day in September [of '95], though we were going to get into town the night before and set up the instruments on the rehearsal Istage. But you can't get people to just set up their stuff and not start playing. So it ended up that the four of us set up and started jamming right away. We had a list of some of the old Journey tunes we were going to play, which none of us had played for all those years. We were having a lot of fun, and then Steve Perry called to find out what was going on, and we said, "Come on over." So it actually started a day early. He came over, we ran through a bunch of the songs, and it felt really good. The next day we got together again and played, and the chemistry was instantaneous.

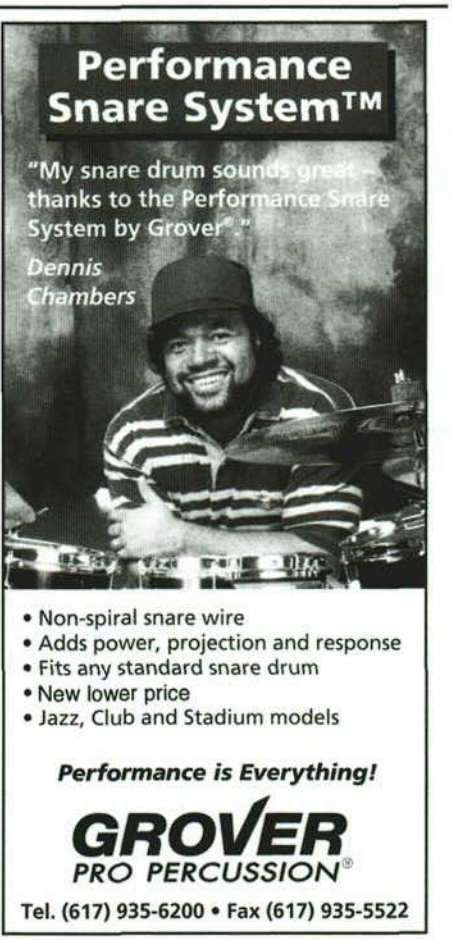
It was interesting to me that it still felt good after all those years; it didn't feel like we had been apart for so long. During the next few months we worked out the legal matters, and then we worked on some of the personal issues that had been unresolved in the ten years.

RF: It's no secret that when Journey ended there were some problems. Ten years later you came back into this feeling...

SS:...a bit apprehensive about getting involved again. As far as having moved on from the pain I went through when I first left the band in '85, I felt resolved about that. I didn't harbor any resentment about being kicked out of the band, because dealing with those pains turned out to be a blessing in disguise for me. It helped me to move on as far as being a musician and developing as a person, and having to make my way in life without the protective cocoon of a successful rock band.

From the point of view of needing a resolution, it didn't matter to me if this reunion happened. What I was apprehensive about was getting involved in this type of lifestyle again, and opening the whole can of worms





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that goes with it. I enjoyed my life and really liked what was going on with Vital Information, the clinics, the sessions, and family life. But with the success of all the other reunion bands, it seemed like a great opportunity to further heal some of the wounds that happened when the band broke up.

RF: So let's talk about where you stand with Vital Information and your last release, *Ray Of Hope*. One of the reviews had applauded the playing, but was not overwhelmed with the material, which raises the question about instrumental music right now—who it gets written for and what impact it's supposed to make.

SS: That is a very big question. I'd have to start by saying it was written for the musicians and listeners alike—to entertain, excite, and inspire them. When the music was first being developed in the late '60s and early '70s, there was a great musical openness and creative spirit that doesn't exist today in the same way. Rock was still fairly innocent and not formularized, soul music was very creative, jazz was experimenting with modal forms, and the climate was ripe for cross-pollination. We had a burst of creativity from Miles Davis, the Tony Williams Lifetime, Mahavishnu Orchestra, Return To Forever, Weather Report, and others that was socially supported as an expression of the times.

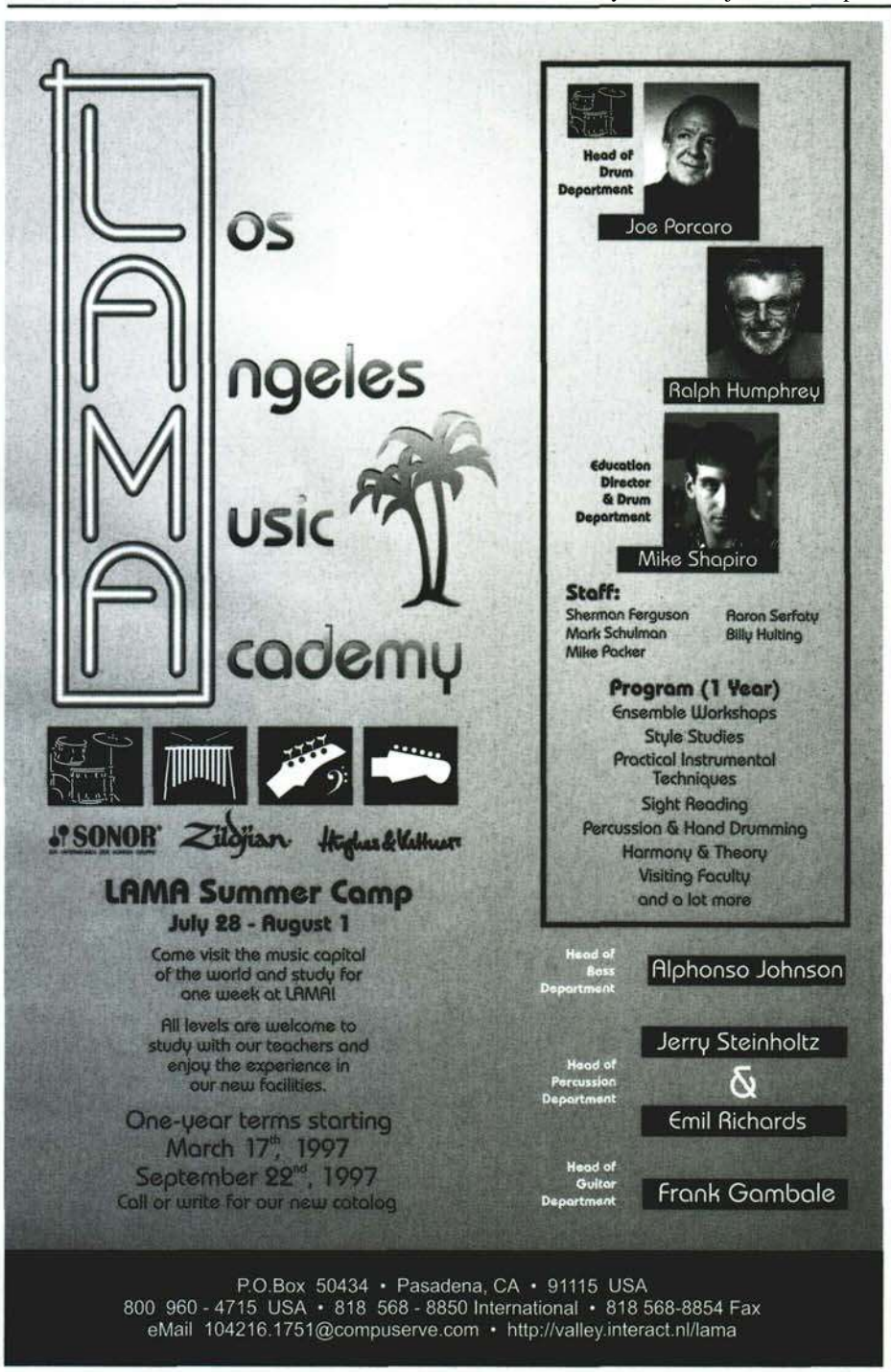
There is still some great music being played, and there are musicians coming up with some fresh approaches. But on the whole, I think the fusion era has come to an end as far as its being a vital movement. It seems that it was assumed that listeners became less adventurous, and the music reflected that. I think there will always be an audience for it if it's played with integrity and high musicianship. The "young lions" are proving that there is still an audience for well-played bebop.

As for *Ray OfHope,* we did a lot of group writing, which is the first time we ever did that. We got in a room and jammed on some grooves, and then completed the compositions based on those grooves, which is more or less the rock 'n' roll writing style I had experienced with Journey. The music we came up with for this record was, in some ways, surprisingly mellow. On the whole, it's not a hard-core fusion record. For whatever reason, that's where the group was at, and we went with it.

We hope to have a new Vital Information recording completed before I go on tour with Journey. We're going to go for a much looser, more improvisational approach. The writing will be blues-based, with Tom Coster playing the instruments he grew up on—Hammond *B3* and Fender Rhodes. Jeff Andrews will be playing a lot of acoustic bass, and Frank Gambale will be using his hollow-body guitar. I'll be going for a more organic jazz drum sound. We're really looking forward to reinventing ourselves and taking on the challenge of making a statement that is personal and interesting to us, as well as entertaining and inspiring to our listeners.

RF: When the journey with Journey is completed, what will you do?

SS: I think I'll just continue to do what I was doing before Journey came along, which is record and tour with Vital Information, do session recordings, clinics, solo performances—be a working musician, and spend time with my family and loved ones.



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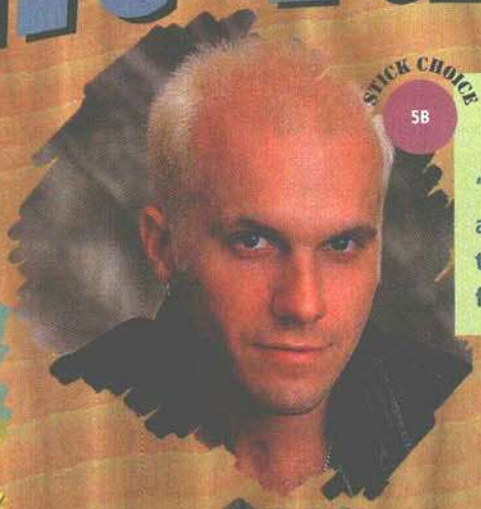

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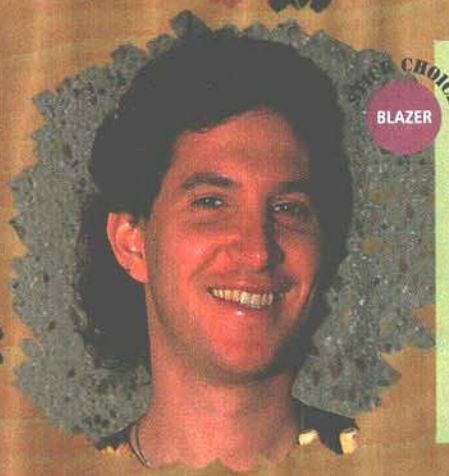

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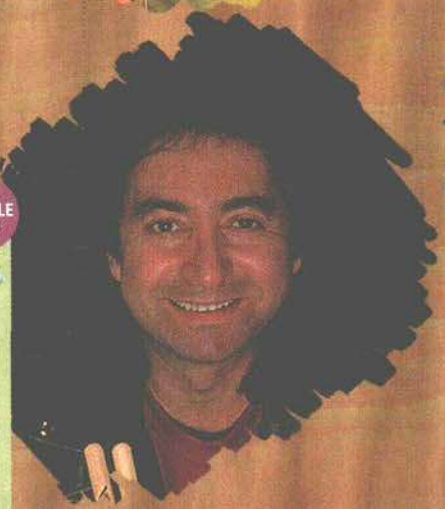

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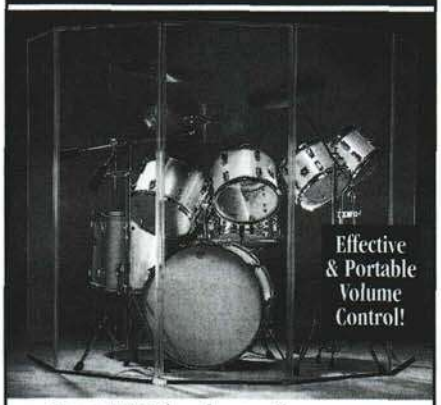
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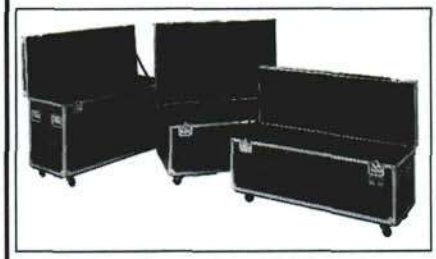
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CHICK COREA'S Gary Novak

The Right Touch

Taking over the drum chair from Dave Weckl in the Chick Corea Elektric Band is the kind of challenge that can either liberate a great talent or send one scurrying down the path of doubt and self-loathing. But when you meet Gary Novak, you realize that storm cloud just aren't this drummer's style.

With a personality as sunny as a day on Venice Beach, Novak's engaging laugh and abundant talent made him a sure bet for success. A triple-threat player—equally proficient at straight-ahead jazz, funk, and fusion—this Chicago native knows how to make a band tick.

For the past four years Novak has traveled from Bali to Berlin as Chick Corea's drummer of choice—first painting the exotic scapes of the Elektric Band II, then off to the freer terrains of the Chick Corea Quartet. Most recently, Gary has been a member of the unit cracking the standard canon on the latest Corea five-CD retrospective set.

As influenced by Elvin Jones and Roy Haynes as by the ruling triumvirate of Weckl, Colaiuta, and Chambers, Novak has developed his own voice while being surrounded by some of the best musicians in the world. Rising to that level, Novak's sound is all about subtlety, musicality, and the "idiom-correct" burn. Switching gears from the swing he was raised on to the slick funk grooves of L.A., then to Corea's fusion-meets-classical supermaze, you never hear tension in Novak's playing; it's always a relaxed feel along with staggeringly accurate chops.

A childhood jam session with legendary pianist Bill Evans seemed a foretaste of what Novak's future held. Work with Lee Ritenour, George Benson, David Sanborn, Maynard Ferguson, Brandon Fields, and Bob Berg cemented his destiny.

Now working in his own group with pianist Billy Childs—and with a possible Corea big band in the offing (the pianist is also thinking about releasing the quartet's live concerts on his own Stretch label)—Novak is leading a heady L.A. life of suntans, sessions, and studio dates. It's just the ticket for this twenty-seven-year-old drumming chameleon.

by Ken Micallef
photos by Alex Solca

KM: Given that Chick Corea's recent music runs the gamut from straight-ahead jazz to funk and fusion, what is it that he *specifically* wants to hear from his drummer?

GN: It's funny, because when I got in the band the direction of his writing had completely changed. With the first Elektric Band—with Weckl, John [Patitucci], Frank [Gambale], and Eric [Marienthal]—the music had more form to it. The way Chick wrote for *us* was with more of an open vibe. He wanted the music to groove on the bottom-end first, and to have more improvisation. A lot of that music sounds pretty intricate, but if you look at the music, there is a head, then a blowing section—almost like a standard.

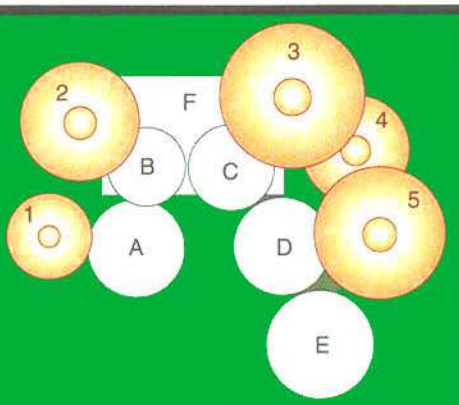
KM: Was the music written this way on *Time Warp?*

"A lot of players can get really hung up when they don't feel they're playing well. The most important thing is to let that go. That's one of the biggest lessons I've learned from Chick. When he doesn't feel spot-on, he still knows how to give a strong performance."

GN: Even *Paint The World* wasn't as structured as some of the Elektric Band records. Chick was after interplay and a basic feel more than anything else.

When I auditioned for Chick we just played some of his older tunes, like "Captain Marvel," "Humpty Dumpty," and "Matrix." We just played a lot of swing tunes. When I *got* the gig, I got it in a funny way. He had a quartet then with Eddie Gomez, Steve Gadd, and Bob Berg. I guess Steve was going back out with Paul Simon, and Chick needed a drummer for a tour he had booked. I wasn't supposed to begin working with him for eight months, but when Gadd left I went out with Chick playing with that jazz quartet. So I was playing bebop and jazz with Chick before Elektric Band II began rehearsing. That was very helpful, because I got a chance to see where Chick lays the beat.

Gary's Kit



Drumset: Sonor *Designer Series* in African bubinga wood finish
A. 5x14 wood snare
B. 10x10 tom
C. 10x12 tom
D. 11x13 tom
E. 12x14 tom
f. 16 x 18 bass (or 18x22)

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" *K Dark* hi-hats
2. 18" *K Dark* crash
3. 20" *K Dark* crash (used as ride)
4. 17" *K Dark* crash
5. 19" *A Custom* crash

Cymbals listed are what Gary uses for funk and fusion gigs. For small-group work, he uses 13" *K* hi-hats (two top cymbals), a 16" *K* crash, a 20" *K Dark* crash (used as a ride), a 22" *Pre-Aged K* ride, and a 22" *K Custom Dry* medium ride with rivets.

Hardware: Sonor

Sticks: Regal Tip *9A* model and wood-handle brushes (with plastic brush material)

Chick's attitude for the second Elektric Band was that he wanted more of a jazz approach to the sound. So I brought in an 18" bass drum and smaller toms. He also didn't want such a high-tech band; he wanted a simpler approach, with electric bass played through a smaller amp, a guitarist with a tube amp, and no electric drums. Chick was playing Fender Rhodes, piano, and one synthesizer. The first Elektric Band had worked with a lot of se-quencers. He wanted to tone all of that down, too. So our approach was much more open. I dug it even more, and Chick never put any limits on me.

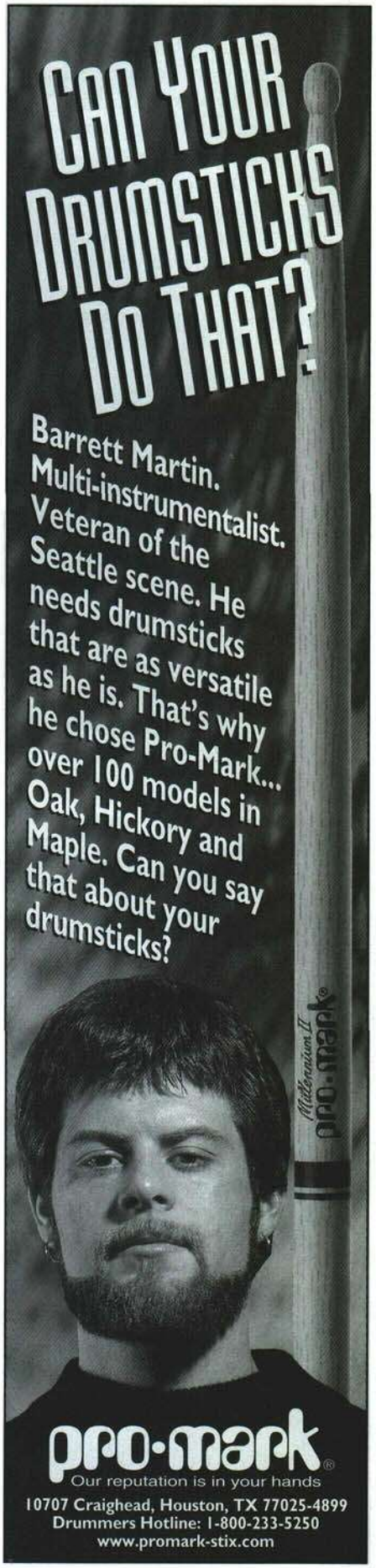
KM: Does Chick give any direction?

GN: He never gave *me* much direction. He'd give me kind of a concept. He never asked me to play a certain part. He had a little more to say with the bass and the guitar, which can clash harmonically with the keyboards.

It was very intimidating to come in and play with Chick Corea. He's worked with so many great drummers, from Roy Haynes and Gadd to Weckl and Lenny White. But he doesn't try to intimidate anybody. He hires you because he likes the way that you play, and then he gives you a lot of freedom.

I think I got the gig because I have a lot of experience playing jazz. He wanted somebody who could swing at a lighter volume and keep the pressure level from getting away, because he wanted to bring in the acoustic piano. We had to work on it a little, volume-wise. With the smaller kit it didn't have so much leakage into the piano mic's on stage.

KM: On "Space" [from *Paint The World],* the bass drum tuning is very resonant.



GN: It's wide open. That was Chick's idea. He asked what I thought of playing an 18" bass drum in the Elektric Band. I'm going to do what he asks, of course. He's always had something amazing to say in every situation he's played in, from Circle, to Miles, to Return To Forever. He gets concepts and puts them all together into an amazing puzzle. I had played an 18" for jazz but never in an electric situation, but I liked it. It was hard going back to the 22" afterwards.

KM: With Chick, you're playing the ghost notes I associate with a jazz drummer but with fusion-like punctuations and fills.

GN: Chick wanted that light-touch-burn factor. He didn't want to have a band that would pound the music down your throat. The first Elektric Band's music lent itself to being played forcefully at times. This music wouldn't go over like that. It wouldn't have the same effect if it didn't have swells in volumes and different approaches to the tunes. The pressure level was definitely softer than any other fusion gig I've been involved with.

KM: Did that require some rethinking on your part?

GN: Not necessarily. I had done a lot of playing with my dad in acoustic settings with no monitors. It did become difficult to hear the bass drum when we cranked it up and got really loud. So *I* had to monitor the bass drum at times.

KM: Speaking of the bass drum, does your heel float up and down on the bass drum pedal?

GN: Yes, for dynamic and sonic reasons. If I play with my toe on the top of the pedal and bury the beater into an 18" drum with two heads and no muffling, it can choke the drum. I needed to adjust my foot technique for some songs.

KM: On the more intricate tracks it sounds like you're following the piano rhythm note-for-note.

GN: It's funny, when we recorded *Paint The World* I had looked at the music for about three days. We didn't tour before that record. We rehearsed for three days, recorded, and *then* went on the road. Chick just handed me the piano score, which told me what to play and what not to play. Listening back to that record, I might have played time through some ensemble sections if I could do it again. That can sound cool, to not play all the punches. Sonny Payne did that sort of thing with Count Basie, where he used to just swing through a lot of those big arrangements. It can have a nice effect. Sometimes when you look at an involved piece of music, you can get a little kick-happy. That's a lesson I learned doing that record.

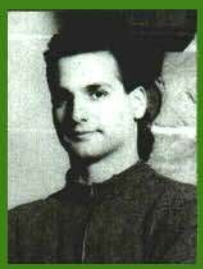
KM: That's refreshing to hear. In this style of music, the rote way to approach it is often to play every note with the melodic players.

GN: I'd rather hear the time through the music sometimes. It can have more continuity than if the drummer kicks everything.

After touring that music for six months I had a completely new approach to playing it. Chick is talking about releasing some of the live shows from that tour. He has libraries of concerts with the quartet and the second Elektric Band.

KM: At your playing level, are there still

John Patitucci On Novak: Bass On Drums



"Gary has a lot of musicianship and musicality that goes way beyond how well he can play the drums," says bass-great John Patitucci, "He's actually a darn good bass player, believe it or not. Gary can play like Marcus Miller! A lot of drummers can pick up a bass and slap it because they've got good right hands, but Gary actually transcribed a lot of Marcus's bass parts off of various Dave Sanborn records. Gary would be wailing on his bass when we were on the road with Chick,

"I was impressed with Gary's overall musicianship," John continues. "Some people try to pigeonhole him: They've heard his funk playing, which he does very well, ond they think he's a fusion guy funking out. Well, they're wrong. He plays straight-ahead with fire and enthusiasm, Some people think he's a jazz drummer trying to play fusion, No, he just likes many styles of music, and he can *play* them."

Ken Micallef

consistent stickings that you rely on to get around the music?

GN: That's something I'm trying to get away from. As I get older, my attitude about music changes a little bit. When I was twenty-one, I was really into Dave Weckl and Vinnie Colaiuta. But none of us can do what they do. We can take some *ideas* from them and try to create our own thing. I'm trying to adapt some of the ways they play styles and get away from the licks and patterns—I'm just trying to improve my improvisational skills. I feel like I'm getting there, but it's a constant battle. Playing off the cuff to me is the best; it has that spark.

During certain gigs, if I don't feel like I'm playing well, I'll try to abort everything I know. Maybe I won't play, or I'll lay back, or I'll take a different approach instead. That way the music can still sound fresh. If I'm trying to pull off something I've practiced and it's not happening, I'll try to have a different attitude. It's about the energy that's coming off the stage, not what you're playing. It's the energy *behind* the music that makes it work.

A lot of players can get really hung up when they don't feel they're playing well. The most important thing is to let that go. That's one of the biggest lessons that I've learned from Chick. When he doesn't feel spot-on, he still knows how to give a strong performance. He knows how to get that energy and communicate it to an audience.

KM: Is it about taking the pressure off yourself?

GN: You just learn to pass the ball a little more. When you're in a band with these virtuoso musicians, you can just lay back and realize that maybe it's not your night. Let the other guys carry it a bit.

KM: For many drummers, if they're not playing well, they can be the most miserable people in the world.

GN: I went through that for a long time. Chick and I had long conversations about it after gigs. He would say it's not about the technique, it's about the attitude underneath—it's about your vibe. Listen to a lot of the great musicians; many of them have no chops. Somehow, I need to realize the most important thing about music is the

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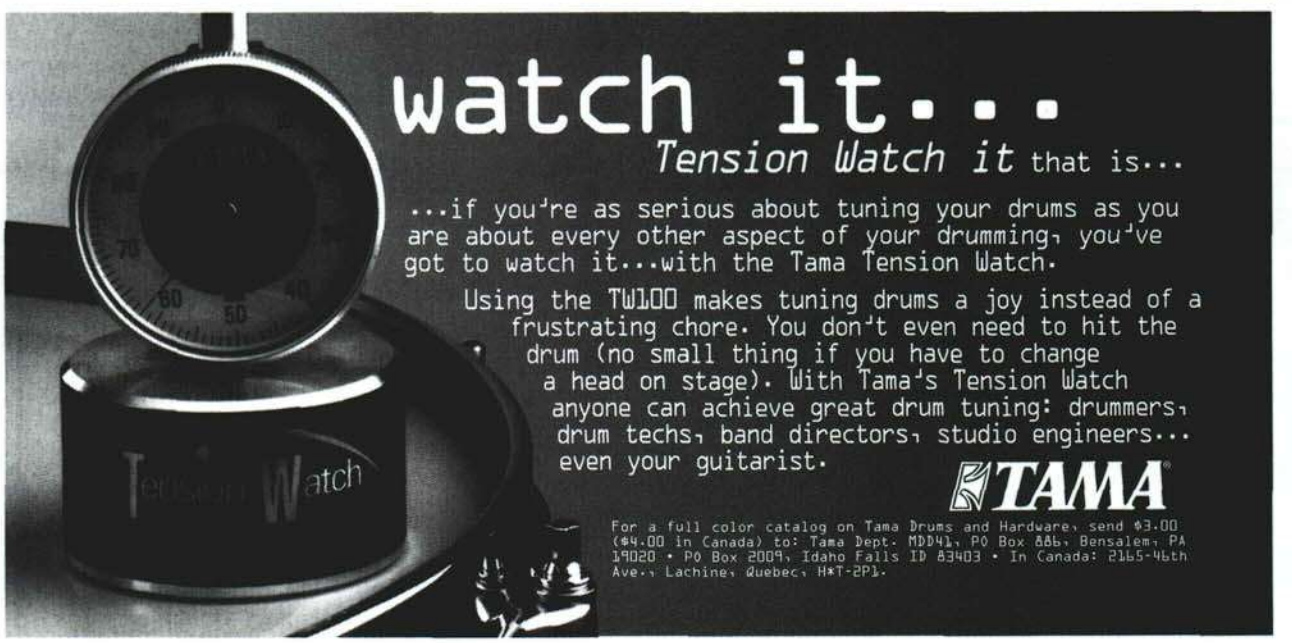

heart it's played with. Steve Jordan can play two notes and completely kill you.

KM: I went to a session recently where Jordan was playing, and hanging from his cymbal stand was a small photo of Jeff Porcaro.

GN: That's amazing. Guys like Jeff, Gadd, John Robinson—they know how to make stuff burn to the ultimate with minimal playing. It's great to make something happen while leaving the audience wanting more. That's what Jeff had. He could play the same groove for a whole song and it would be a hit. It's my dream to have people hire me because I can come up with a personality for a song. That's my ultimate goal in music.

KM: You played straight grooves with George Benson.

GN: George is such an open guy. You can ask him anything about music and he loves to talk about it. He's a father figure to the people in his band. Playing with George was where I basically got my funk together. He won't rag on you for playing something wrong, but he will definitely tell you what he wants.

KM: On *Paint The World* you're right on the edge of the time with the fusion stuff, while your funk grooves are laid back, behind the beat.

GN: That's the Jeff Porcaro school. I love his playing so much. He never sounded like he was getting ahead of the beat. That's a challenge for me because of the different gigs I do. I was playing jazz with Bob Berg for the last three weeks, and his music has a lot of energy. You're pushing, swinging, and trying as hard as you can—it's a blowing gig. When I come off the road I have a band with Billy Childs and Leslie King, and the music is like Hendrix but combined with poetry. That music has to have a lazy lope to it. It's hard to switch gears between the two styles.

When you play many styles of music you have to reel yourself in and immerse yourself in the music when changing styles. My theory is that you have to crank the CD player and sit and vibe and get yourself back in that mindset. It's not that easy for me. I don't want to sound like a bebop drummer on a rock gig, or vice versa.

KM: So before you recorded the swing disc of the Chick Corea box set *[Music Forever & Beyond, The Selected Works Of*

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Here's a sampling of Gary's recorded output,

Artist	Album
Brandon Fields	Everybody's Business
Elektric Band II	Paint The World
The Chick Corea Quartet	Time Warp
Chick Corea	Music Forever & Beyond: The Selected Works Of Chick Corea 1964-1996
Blueseum	Portrait Of A Groove

Here are a few albums that inspire Gary.

Artist	Album	Drummer
Miles Davis	The Sorcerer	Tony Williams
Stan Getz/Bill Evans	The Day My Heart Stood Still	Elvin Jones
Chick Corea	Now He Sings, Now He SoPs	Roy Haynes
Chick Corea	My Spanish Heart	Steve Gadd
David Sanborn	Voyeur	Steve Gadd
Led Zeppelin	Houses Of The Holy	John Bonham
Stevie Wonder	Innervisions	Stevie Wonder
Bill Evans	The Paris Concerts	Marty Morrell
Bill Connors	Step It	Dave Weckl
Alan Holdsworth	Secrets	Vinnie Colaiuta
Jimi Hendrix	Band Of Gypsys	Buddy Miles
The Police	Ghost In The Machine	Stewart Copeland

Chick Corea 1964-1996], you listened to a lot of jazz?

GN: I listened to Elvin for three weeks straight! I put on a lot of Roy, too. I checked out Bill Stewart, too. He's one of the greatest drummers around. He's got all the hip things of Jack [DeJohnette], Roy [Haynes], and Tony [Williams], but he's got his own thing. He completely motivates me. He's a major influence. I really strive to capture the vibe of that music. If you're not coming from the right head space, you won't convey the right message.

KM: You seem able to cover all of the bases very effectively.

GN: I was doing this R&B gig in California a while back with some good players, covering Luther Vandross, Dave Sanborn, and Miles stuff. I started messing around on the bass guitar for a few tunes, and this guy came up and sat in on drums. He was playing very busy over this simple bass line I was playing. And I realized, *man,* I do that! I knew from then on that I would never do that again.

I saw the music from a different perspective. It freaked me out. I was thinking all the way home in the car, "I gotta rearrange the way I play." Those tricky hi-hat things or the ghost notes can get in the way of everybody else. That changed my playing, as did listening to a lot of Marcus Miller on David Sanborn's *Voyeur.*

KM: Patitucci says you're quite the bass player.

GN: Well, I've hung out on the tour bus with him and learned some fingering exercises, but I'm not on that level. Actually, I've been working on my piano chops. I'm

focusing on becoming a songwriter, so I want to get my piano playing together. That's another goal of mine.

KM: What do you practice now?

GN: I haven't been shedding much on the drums; I'm working on the piano. Piano helps your "delicate" chops. You're moving fingers in independent motions. It gives you more dexterity between the fingers. I'm trying to learn voicings now. I'm really a novice piano player.

KM: Your dad, Larry Novak, is one of Chicago's best-known pianists.

GN: Yeah, he does a lot of different things—arranging, teaching, sessions, and jazz gigs. My dad is playing at the Green Mill in Chicago with [bassist] Steve LaSpina for a week. He's trying to get Bob Berg for a week, too. My dad and I did some recordings with Patitucci last summer. We're going to finish the record this summer and hopefully get a deal. That would be a dream come true, because I grew up playing with my dad.

KM: When you're not with Chick, how does your tuning change?

GN: Actually, I recently switched drums from Yamaha to Sonor. I was having trouble getting the Yamahas to work in certain acoustic settings, for the way I touch the drums. It's just personal taste at this point. I like to get a lot of ring out of the toms, tuning them high and not having them sound choked. The Yamahas have a ring duration of a quarter note, and I need a half note. When you play dead drums you tend to play a little busier. With the Sonors I

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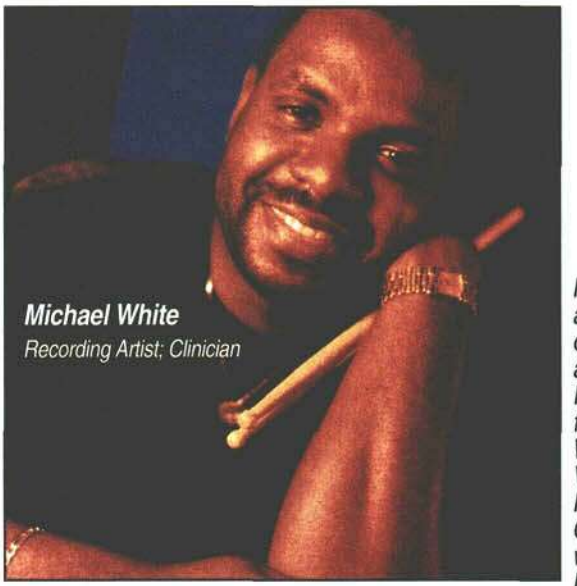
find it easier to lay back and kick it. You can hit one note and it will fill up some space. The Sonors have been perfect for every gig I've played.

KM: Coming to the Elektric Band II after Dave Weckl must have been a pressurized situation, but you're friends with Dave. Did he help you get the gig?

GN: When Chick and Dave decided the gig had run its course, and Dave wanted to get more into production, I think John Patitucci and Dave helped me get the audition. But Chick and I played for seven hours at the audition. That was cool, playing with Chick all day. He called me a month later and offered me the gig.

KM: You followed Dave Weckl, the biggest drum phenom since Gadd, into "his" gig; you must have felt some pressure.

GN: When I first got the gig, hecklers would shout, "Where's Dave?" Chick said to me, "Don't pay attention to those people, don't read reviews. You need to be developing yourself." It took about a year to get over that hump. But to come in and try to say something valid after Dave was a very intimidating thing. I had to let it go.



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Michael White's credentials are impeccable. He's toured or recorded with an array of artists: George Benson, Diana Ross, David Sanborn, Maze featuring Frankie Beverly, Whitney Houston, Luther Vandross, Patrice Rushen, Ricki Lee Jones, Stanley Clarke, Earth Wind & Fire, as well as jingles for Coca-Cola, McDonalds, and Budweiser. He's also earned four gold records from his gig with Frankie Beverly and Maze. His diversity is his trademark.

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Dave supported me too. He told me to cultivate my own thing. I had to do that, or I would've jumped out a window.

The first time I played in the Elektric Band was at the Bottom Line in New York. Roy Haynes was in the audience. That was intimidating. But the only way to grow is to be out there doing it. And when you come to the realization that everybody has an opinion—and you know what that means—it's easier to deal with. You have to pump yourself up. Chick did hire me, after all; I must be doing *something* right.

KM: Dave really got into the Gary Chester method. Did you study it as well?

GN: I never got into all of that. I had a teacher when I was really young, but I didn't take private lessons until I got to DePaul University. At DePaul I studied with Al Payson from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and with Mike Green, who played with the Chicago Lyric Opera. I studied mallets and snare drum.

I was pretty behind the game when I got to college. I wasn't a good reader, though I played a lot of bebop with my dad. I was there for a year, but I got tired of studying classical percussion. Those guys are dedicated; I'd have to practice twenty hours a day to come up to their level.

I decided to move to New York or L.A., and though I *wanted* to live in New York, since L.A. is a cheaper place to live, that's where I went. I was paying $300 a month rent, sharing a house with a couple of roommates. You could never find that in New York. And the lifestyle in L.A. is more my style. There are some great players there, too. I get to hang with Weckl; he's there. And Vinnie used to be there. I'd go see him a lot. He was amazing.

When Vinnie moved out of town the live music scene seemed to dry up a bit. I used to enjoy seeing him. He's got so much to offer. I'd show up an hour early and sit right next to his floor tom. I was nineteen, fresh in L.A., and at that time he was playing around a lot. It was amazing to see that level of playing that often.

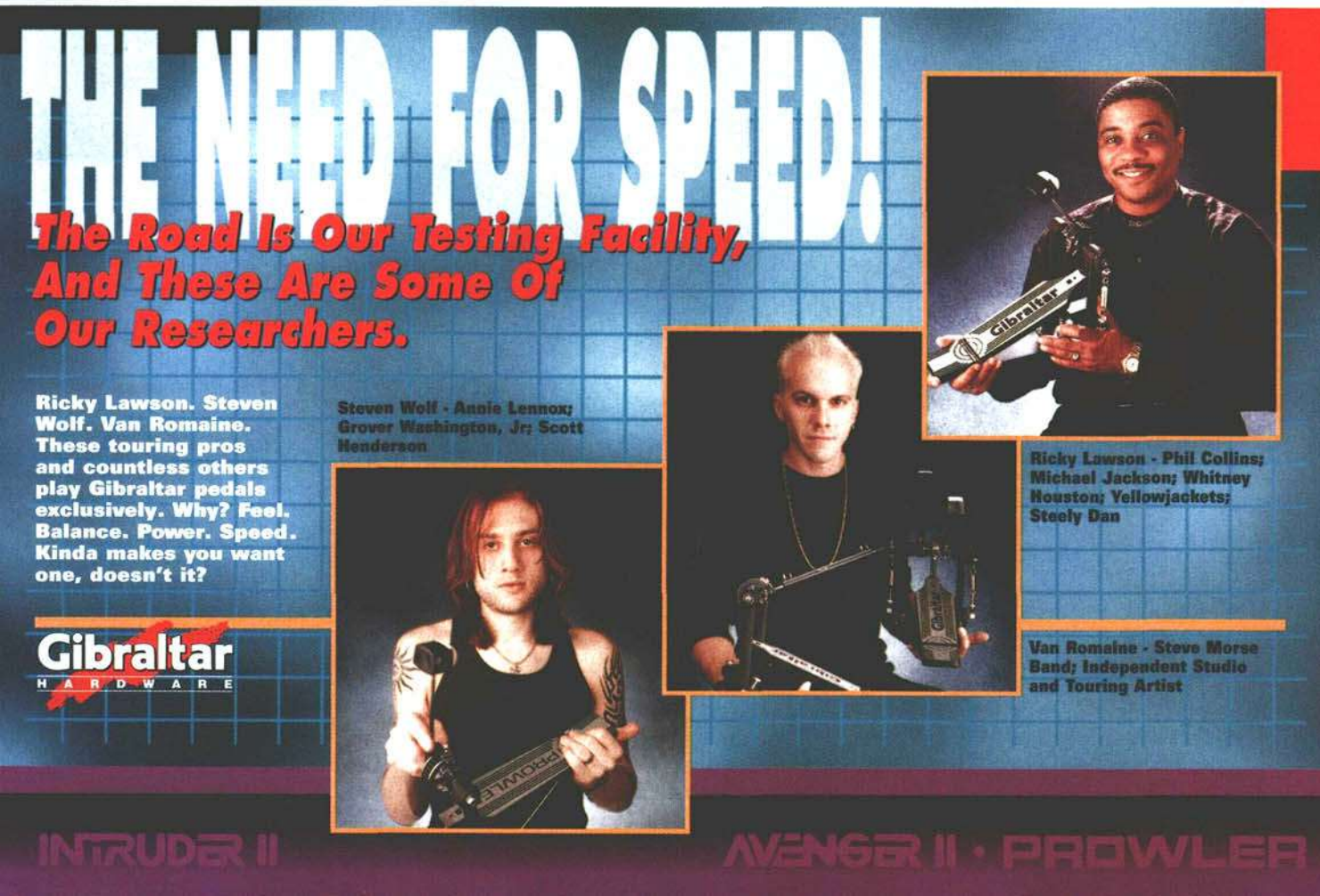
KM: What did you pull from Vinnie, Weckl, and Dennis Chambers?

GN: I definitely listen to Dennis a lot now. With Vinnie, I got into the way he used to improvise triplets, playing them around the drums between the foot and hands. I could never cop the patterns exactly, but I tried to emulate his phrasing so I could come up with my own sticking.

I don't believe in transcribing things exactly. If you can hear and sing the phrase a drummer is playing, you can definitely figure out your own way and create your own thing. I transcribed things when I was in high school, but I mostly just tried to get it by ear, going for the sound and not the sticking. You can develop your own vocabulary by getting your own stickings. For instance, I can't stick like Dave. Sometimes he plays doubles on the toms, but I don't really do that. I don't have his touch, so I figured out my own way.

KM: The level of drumming is so high now, and drummers are required to be able to play such diverse gigs. What's your advice to a kid who wants to do what you're doing?

GN: You have to check out what other musicians like from drummers. There is a certain amount of info you can get from other drummers, but the most important stuff I've learned is from tenor players. "Don't play that...play this... I hate it when drummers play that." That's when you can figure out what to play.



You have to understand why Trane liked Elvin so much, or why Chick likes Roy Haynes so much. Talk to other musicians. They can't talk about rudiments, but they know what makes them feel good when they play. Besides, other drummers aren't going to hire you.

KM: You must have asked Chick what it's like to play with Roy, Tony, and Gadd.

GN: His favorite thing is what he calls "the bubble," the dance on the ride cymbal. That's Chick's thing. When it's really swinging on the ride cymbal he smiles and is happy. George Benson never wanted me to play a fill. A drummer has to know what people want. They want you to keep very good time and make it groove. That keeps you working. Being able to do all this ballistic stuff is icing on the cake.

KM: You say that, being able to do it.

GN: I've practiced it. But Jeff Porcaro made an amazing living not playing that stuff. John Robinson makes a living and has valid things to say without playing that stuff. If you want to play all that stuff, pursue it, but that shouldn't be the main goal. Your role is not to be out in the forefront, it's a complementary position. If you stand out you won't be called back because you're taking the focus away from somebody else.

KM: You were swinging with your dad when you were twelve. That's a highly developed language to have at such a young age.

GN: But at that age I wasn't afraid to suck. You're not afraid to play badly. You're just having fun. My dad sat me down with some Basie records and said, "Play to these." As a kid that's what I liked to do, all day long. I was jamming with Sonny Payne! I used to sit down with all the early Sanborn records and play along to them. You're listening to Marcus Miller, understanding where he's placing the beat. That's how I learned how to play.

KM: How do bassists John Patitucci and Jimmy Earl differ in terms of what you have to do?

GN: They're completely opposite. Jimmy is total R&B. John has done that, but his approach is like a saxophone player in the way that he phrases. He comes out of Coltrane and Michael Brecker. It's a different perspective. John is a little more up on the edge, Jimmy is right down the middle of the beat.

KM: On the funk with Jimmy, you're behind the beat. How do you relax enough to put it behind the beat so it grooves?

GN: When you're practicing with a click track, wait for it to click before you play. Don't try to anticipate it, just wait for it to happen. That way you're not sounding nervous. It's a lot easier to catch up to a beat than to slow it down. Jazz, on the other hand, should stay on the edge.

KM: You're very relaxed in all the music you play.

GN: A lot of tenseness in your personality can reflect in your playing. Some guys are tense people, and they'll play that way. I'm a pretty laid-back person, I like music to be loose. I think it's in your mind more than a physical thing. If you're trying to force something out that you're not capable of playing, you will get stiff. You have to get your hands to do what your mind is thinking.

KM: What about posture and your setup?

GN: A lot of people can't play on my setup because I sit really low, with the drums at a medium height. I have to feel like I'm sitting at a lower level because if I get the

drum stool too high I lean over the kit and I get to the drums too fast. If I'm low I have more focus. I like to sit straight and lean back on the seat.

KM: Were you reading a chart when you recorded "Ished" [from *Paint The World*]?

GN: That tune may sound difficult, but there are basically two sections to it. There's a melody part, which has time all the way through, and the other section that just repeats. Once you get it down you don't have to look at the music. Remember Herbie Hancock's "Actual Proof" with Mike Clark on drums? "Ished" is that kind of R&B tune, where you're dancing around and not necessarily playing the backbeat. It's a little slippery.

"Actual Proof" is one of the baddest songs ever recorded. Mike Clark was stellar with the Headhunters. That's how I like to hear instrumental R&B music. We only did a couple of takes of "Ished." Chick is a first-take kind of guy, though I wish he would occasionally let me do a couple more. He records very quickly. We did *Paint The World* in two days.

KM: What about the groove on "Tumba Island"?

GN: We had played that with the quartet, so I was comfortable with it. Some of that does sound more difficult than it is if you look at the music. It's all usually in four.

KM: On "Tone Poem" you play kind of an illusionary groove.

GN: I think I ripped that off from Zach Danziger on Leni Stern's *Closer To The Light.* I love Zach's playing. I think he is one of the strongest drummers in the world. Not only is he a great drummer, he's a hilarious guy. We used to go over to Drummers Collective and double-drum. He plays in a very interesting style because he's a lefty on a right-handed kit. And he's got unbelievable control to improvise between his hands and feet. He's got his own thing.

KM: On your solo in "New Life," can you remember the patterns or note phrases you played?

GN: I was frustrated with that take actually. With solos I try to set an atmosphere. It sounds artsy-fartsy, but I try to think of a color or an angry sound for a minute, interpret it on the drums, and then let it chill out. I try to create some tension and then release it, especially when it's an open solo and I'm playing without chord changes or melody. You're trying to make a musical statement in an empty space.

Musicians can get self-centered about their playing, but the most important thing is communicating to an audience and making them smile. Chick is great at that. He's very interested in what the common audience member wants to hear. Chick is a people person.

KM: Speaking of incredible piano players, is it true that Bill Evans would come over to your house when you were a kid?

GN: He and my dad were close friends. When I was twelve he came over to the house while he was in Chicago for a gig, and we went downstairs and played "My Romance" and "Someday My Prince Will Come." It's funny to be able to say that. He enjoyed playing with a twelve-year-old kid, I guess. I was into it.

KM: Why did you leave Chicago for L.A.?

GN: I needed a change. I went to L.A. in August of 1988. I went to school at Cal State Northridge as a liberal arts major. Then, after one semester there, I got the gig with Maynard Ferguson. Steve Ettleson from Yamaha recommended me for the gig. I went out with Maynard for two months, took a break, and then went out for another two months. It was hard. It's a lot of one-nighters. I went to forty states in four months! So I wanted to go back to L.A. and find a different scene, and that's when I began working with Brandon Fields. I auditioned, got the gig, and that's when I first started getting into the L.A. music scene.

Through Brandon I started meeting other musicians around town, like Jimmy Johnson and John Pena. And playing with Brandon gets you recognition, because Vinnie and Tom Brechtlein used to be in his band. All the guys played with him. I still work with Brandon when I can.

Then Peter Erskine recommended me to work with Lee Ritenour, and I did that for a while in 1990. I got lucky. I met some people who were working. Then I met David Witham through Lee Ritenour, and he was George Benson's musical director. So that was the next step.

When I got the call for that I had to learn sixty Benson tunes in two days. I had to play a sold-out gig at the Westbury Music

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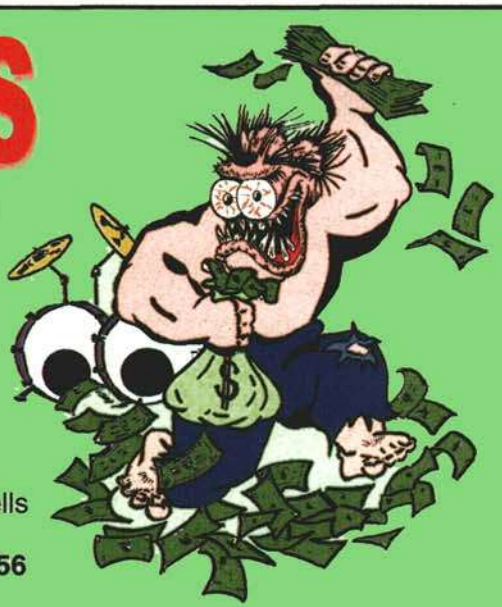

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Fair in New York with no rehearsal. George doesn't have a set list. He just plays what he wants, and you better know it. I was up for forty-eight hours listening to records, trying to learn all those Harvey Mason grooves.

KM: It sounds like you have been very conscientious on all of your gigs.

GN: You have to be these days. If you don't nail it the first time they'll call somebody else who plays just as good as you do. There are so many great drummers today, you have to be prepared.

I played with George for a year and a half, and then I went back to playing gigs around L.A. I met Dave Weckl at Catalina's, we hung out, and we got to be friends. The next thing I knew, he left Chick's band and I got the call. Dave Sanborn called me at the same time, and it was my dream to play with him. I had a difficult decision to make. I couldn't say no to Chick Corea—he offered me two years of work. But it was so weird calling David Sanborn and turning him down. He is still one of my favorite musicians.

KM: And you've played with Bob Berg.

GN: We met through Chick's band. We're going to record together, and I'm excited about that. He really digs the drums. He wants me to play all-out all of the time.

And I'm working in the acid-rock-funk trio I mentioned earlier with a spoken-word artist and Billy Childs. The music is like rap-funk-Hendrix-trippy, and I think it could sell. That's a focus of mine now. It's very intricate music because the arrangements have to be really strong and worked out. It's a show.

I also want to focus on writing and producing. I have a studio in my home that I've put way too much money into, so I want to stay in town and work on my art and get my sound and concept together. I love playing in other people's bands, but if I wait too long its gonna take me longer to catch up. Guys who do films and sessions figure you're out on the road, and they don't call you, so I want to stay home.

KM: If I may ask, what's the going rate for a week in Europe with a Chick Corea-level leader?

GN: You can ask for anywhere from $1,000 to $1,500 a show. Some people make $2,000 to $2,500 a show with him. If a tour is long, with a lot of dates, they pay by the week. Those gigs range between $2,000 and $4,000 a week. It's good money, but if you only go out for three weeks, you have to fill up the rest of your schedule. You make a fast fifteen grand, and then you're back home needing a gig.

KM: With all of the gigs you've done, does a particular playing experience stand out?

GN: I did a strange gig with Chick down in Bali. We were performing at this five-star restaurant that was in a huge outdoor hut. Actually, I think *everything* in Bali is in a big outdoor hut. Well, we were taking the music pretty far left at that point because we'd been on the road for three months, but this South Pacific audience was into it. They were so intuitive and into every nuance of the music. To be able to communicate with an audience from such a different culture was probably the most interesting gig I've done with Chick. They loved every beat.

Tony Capobianco

For twelve of his sixteen years as a drummer, New Jersey native Tony Capobianco has been working with his progressive rock band Xenon. In that time, the group has made two recordings: *America's New Design* (released in America in 1989 and re-released in Europe in 1996) and *Simple* (released in 1996). The group has played on many live college radio broadcasts and has generated enough interest to be invited to showcase for several major record labels.

Tony's early influences included Neil Peart, Simon Phillips, and Steve Smith. In addition to his work with Xenon, he's a sought-after session player who has recorded with many area rock acts (as well as with his own pet fusion project, S.O.S.). Recordings by both Xenon and S.O.S. demonstrate Tony's impressive technique and sense of musical composition. His versatility is demonstrated by the fact that Tony has also been involved in the arrangement and performances of local theatrical productions of *Godspell, Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat,* and *Once Upon A Mattress.* A dedicated educator as well, Tony has given clinics at Staten Island, New York's Percussion Paradise in addition to maintaining a private teaching practice.

Tony performs on a massive setup comprised of Ludwig drums, LP percussion, Zildjian cymbals, and Simmons, KAT, and Akai electronics—all mounted on a customized Gibraltar rack and played with *Axis* pedals and Regal Tip sticks. As evidenced by his obvious dedication, Tony's goals are to make Xenon a touring and recording success, and to continue his development as a studio player.

Strother Bullins

Twenty-two-year-old Strother Bullins hails from Westfield, North Carolina. Currently a music industry major at Appalachian State University, he gets plenty of opportunities to play and record on projects by other ASU music majors. But his first playing priority is Dropkick, a group that combines the pop influences of Journey and Boston with progressive and groove-oriented textures to create "original modern rock with a distinctive twist." The group recently produced a self-titled CD on Southern Synergy Recordings.

"If we want to write pop, we write pop; if we want to write complex, we write complex," says Strother (who is a major contributor to the group's songwriting efforts). "In the end, every song is unmistakably *us."* The same can be said of Strother's drumming style, which combines technical precision with musical creativity and originality. "I'm a song-oriented player," he says. "I try to create interesting drum parts that are truly a part of the *song,* not just a bunch of fills."

Strother plays those parts on a Mapex *Orion* kit with Paiste cymbals and an *Axis* double pedal. His goals include further study and professional work in the recording aspects of the music industry—in the studio, behind the console, and even in the front office. "I'll also continue to play with Dropkick and in as many other band and session situations as humanly possible," he continues. "No matter what exact area I end up in, I'll definitely have a career in the music business, and I will *always* be a drummer."

Jason Paul Byrne

Versatility is the watchword of Jason Paul Byrne of New York City. His "current playing situations" list includes such diverse artists as Trailside Rangers (a hard-edged country-rock band), Le Onde (an Italian/American wedding and party band), and Tony Noe, Scott McClatchy, Kathena Bryant, and Tim Champion (all original pop singer/songwriters). Jason is also putting together a jazz quartet of his own, and teaches privately. The guy keeps busy.

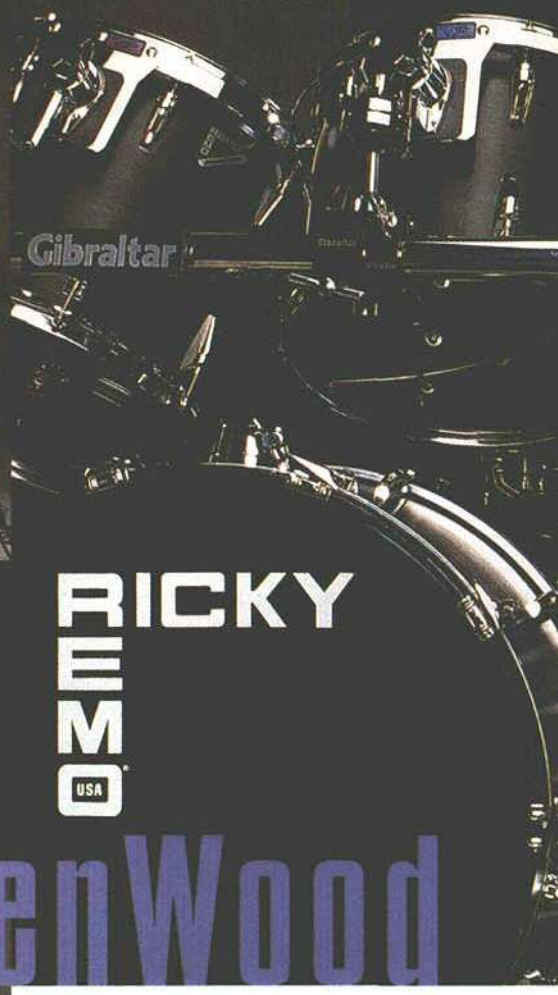
Jason cites his own teachers as his primary influences. Those include Kim Plainfield, Sam Ulano, Les DeMerle, Dom Famularo, Joe Morello, Mike Clark, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and Kenny Washington. Artists such as Buddy Rich, Peter Erskine, Dave Weckl, Dennis Chambers, Neil Peart, and Steve Smith have also been important to his development.

Jason's demo tape with a variety of artists—along with a CD by Trailside Rangers called *The Great Divide* [Funky Mushroom Records]—reveal a tasteful style that emphasizes musical support. He further varies his performances by his choice of equipment: either a Pearl maple-shelled kit or a Premier birch set, with a variety of snare drums, Zildjian cymbals, LP percussion, and Roland electronics.

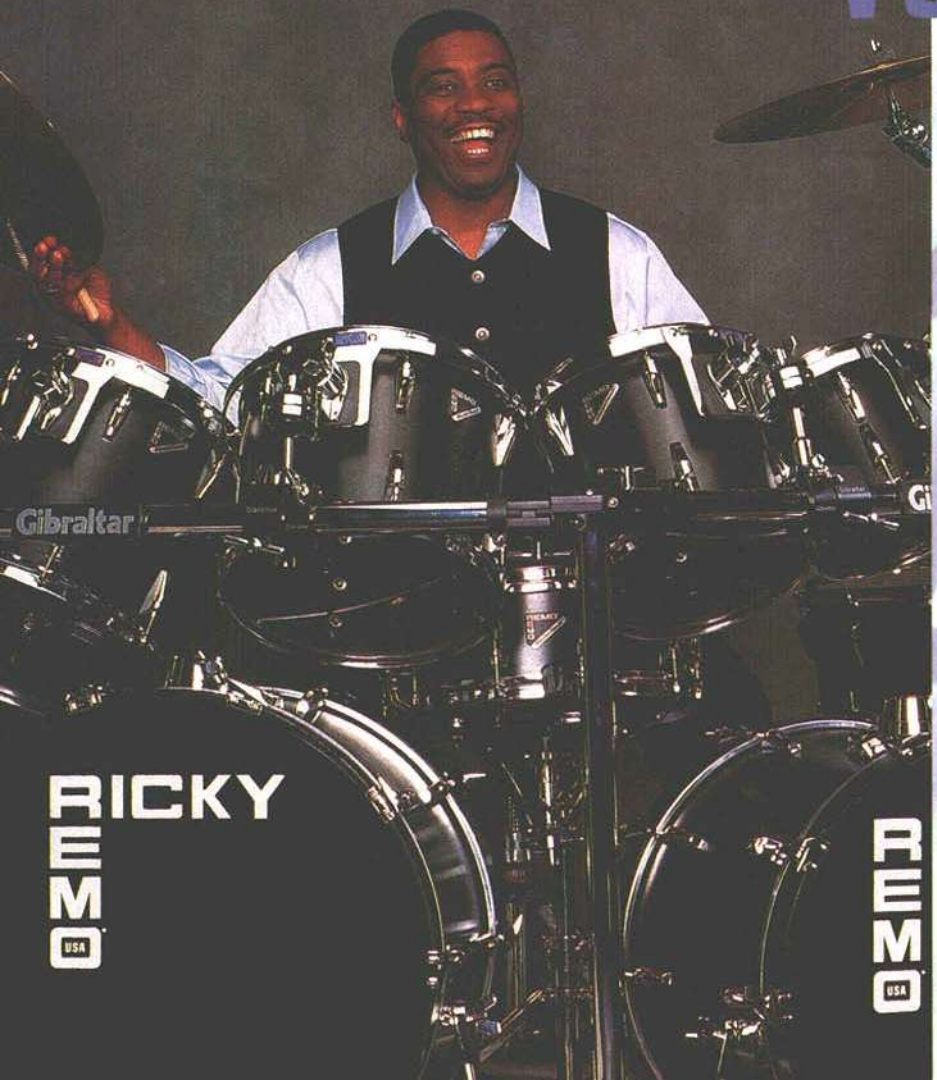
As for goals, Jason says his short-term goal is "to improve as a player by studying and practicing regularly, along with doing *lots* of live playing. I believe this will lead me to my long-term goal, which is to be a freelance player who records and tours with many different artists. I also have plans to lead my own quartet and to record as a leader."

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move,* send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for nor credited.) The bio sketch should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.

Why is Ricky Lawson smiling?



MasterTouch VenWood



Is it because of the satisfaction and acclaim he's received after logging thousands of miles on the road with multiplatinum artists like Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, Phil Collins and Steely Dan?

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RECORDINGS

MODE PLAGAL

Mode Plagal (Ano Kato/Rei)

drummer: Takis Kanellos

percussionist (plus gtr): Kleon Antoniou

with Theodoros Rellos (sp, to sx), four other occasional musicians

First, let's get past the lovely chauvinistic surprise that there is a bracing jazz and progressive rock scene in northern Greece. *Mode Plagal* is hipper than any new American record I've heard in a long time.

Blending jazz, funk, and a dash of new age color with Greek folk music (and the seamlessly "odd" meters that have confounded lesser civilizations for centuries), the group makes a case for fusion that might have saved the genre twenty years ago. Working mostly without a bass player (guitarist Kleon Antoniou fills both chairs admirably) and evoking a Utopian ensemble that could include David Liebman, Michael Brecker, Andy Summers, Cecil Taylor, Gary Husband, and the master drummers from half a dozen African villages, Mode Plagal takes traditional dances and carols from Macedonia and Thrace and grooves them to death. Their own forms are equally engaging: "Somebody Is Falling (Outside My Window)" sounds like a tango class taken over by the Tony Williams Lifetime.

The hour-long CD, boldly improvised and utterly without filler, was recorded with sumptuous, edgy, pristine clarity. Drummer Takis Kanellos shines throughout: His drum sound is expansive, his wildest cymbals enjoy equal time with more conventional metals, his swinging fills get right to the point, and his patterns combine power and aggression with casual elegance.

On a recent visit to Thessaloniki, Billy Cobham listened to a number of Greek jazz albums. This is the one he bought.

Hal Howland

LOUDSPEAKER

Re-Vertebrate (Another Planet)

drummer: Martin Kob

with Matt Borruso (gtr, vcl), Christian Bongers (bs)

On the surface, this is simply cool music. Pop it in, forget about it, and cruise. But if you delve more deeply—say, with headphones—you'll hear a lot more going on within the grooves. Drummer Martin Kob leads this New York City trio through a blend of '70s swagger, '80s hair rock, and '90s moodiness. Along the way, he distinguishes himself with a flair for spicing up a beat with subtle snare work and cymbal-based approaches to rhythm.

There's nothing particularly remarkable about a drummer with a knack for stick-drags, flams, and off-the-beat accents. But that snare work makes the difference here between re-hashed rock and an album that's fun to listen to from beginning to end.

Though much of the album is set in straight time, the finer moments come when the band sparks up an off-time groove, as in "Supermantra," an instrumental in 5/8 where Kob starts with the cymbals to build the song dynamically and percussively. On the album's closing cut, "The Twin," Kob leads the group through a Stray Cats-styled romp, again in 5/8.

Loudspeaker is part of a growing trend in what I call "swing rock"—music that potentially appeals on different levels to everyone from headbangers to educated musicians. If that appeal ever reaches radio, expect Loudspeaker and other "swing rock" bands to become household names.

Matt Peiken

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

PAUL WERTICO bites into a juicy opportunity to stretch out beyond boss Pat Metheny's usual restraints on the guitarist's latest, avant-garde-ish CD, *Quartet* (Geffen).

Forget the hi-tech horror image of Marilyn Manson for a moment, and check out show-drummer turned mic'-stand target **GINGER FISH** on Manson's *Antichrist Superstar* (Interscope); there's some great kit work fueling the inferno.

JERRY MAROTTA and PETE THOMAS insinuate, prod, and decorate Suzanne Vega's latest, *Nine Objects Of Desire* (A&M), with their usual sensitivity and imagination, and even share duties on several of Vega's latest pop/folk/rock/lounge forays. (Soul Coughing's **Yuval Gabay** lends his sticks to one cut as well.)

DRUM ESSENTIALS (Musicians Resources International) is, as the publisher accurately subtitles, "the little black book for drummers and percussionists," containing very comprehensive lists of manufacturers, equipment services, schools, CD, book, and video sources, and pretty much every other contact the working drummer needs.

Head on over to your nearest bookstore and pull down a copy of **ROCK HARDWARE** (Miller Freeman), a beautifully produced book describing "the great instruments, how they are used, and how they shape the sound of popular music," with lots of interesting sidebars, excellent photos, and unique insights.

RATING SCALE

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

NOOVOODOO

Holylands (Fore Reel)

drummer: Jimmy Daniel

percussionists: Osvaldo Sanchez, Alfredo Hidrovo

with Mary DeSarle, Johanna Daughtrey, Zainab Jab. (vcl), Rich Cohen (gtr), Jocel Almeus (kybd), Waldo Chavez (bs)

As world music's influence seeps into popdom's consciousness, dilettantes will inevitably re-package their otherwise provincial wares to succor the public's yearning for "something different" (but not *too* different). But instead of grafting a few ethnic trappings onto the tired harmonic and melodic conventions of pop (under any name), NooVooDoo builds accessible, "pop-y" tunes atop an authentic, rhythmically rich ethnic foundation. Brighter, more groovin', and far less ethnically homogenized than Rusted Root, NooVooDoo presents a depth of Afro-Caribbean awareness that reads as earthy integrity.

John Mellencamp alumnus drummer Jimmy Daniel founded and fuels NooVooDoo after extensive touring and study in Brazil, Trinidad, Jamaica, Cuba, and Haiti. Along with Salvadoran bassist Waldo Chavez and two fine Central American percussionists, Daniel drives makaya, petro, mascarron, and wanja la rhythms not so much with muscle as with infectious, rolling motion.

Much of *Holylands'* pop sensibility stems from Mary DeSarle's soulful, gutsy lead vocals. DeSarle, who together with Daniels writes most of the band's spiritually powerful material, followed backup work with Paul Simon and others with study of Mexican, Colombian, and Venezuelan folk music, plus soca and cajun (fronting her own band, Mon Cher Creole). Haitian keyboardist Jocel Almeus and American guitarist Rich Cohen provide textural and rhythmic interest, to which Cohen adds some hot solo and fill work.

Voodoo, says "My God," is religion, not magic. Still, Daniel's drumming and NooVooDoo's music are highly trance- (and dance-) inducing. While other bands jump on the world music bandwagon, NooVooDoo can say—literally and from the heart—"been there, done that."

Rich Watson

SPACE NEEDLE

The Moray Eels Eat The Space Needle (Zero Hour)

drummer: Jud Ehrbar (plus vcl and other instruments)

with. Jeff Gatland (gtr and other instruments), Anders Parker (gtr and other instruments)

On their sophomore effort, Space Needle simplifies and complicates, mystifies and clarifies, all depending on their mood—which changes often and dramatically. Starting off with the thirteen-plus-minute instrumental "Where The Fucks [sic] My Wallet," which bursts from a space-trance vibe into a downtown-avant-noise explosion, the trio pretty much let you know right off the bat that they couldn't care a rat's heinie whether MTV or college radio will be able to categorize—much less play—them. Which is a shame, because this CD also features at least three incredibly simple, beautiful ballads, that, I'm sorry, are just so much more affecting than anything Pearl Jam, Tori Amos, and most other critics' darlings have come up with to date.

Drummer/vocalist/songwriter Ehrbar seems intent on bouncing from one musical extreme to another, though somehow this tack never seems forced. His playing can be as tearjerking as Levon Helm's one minute ("Never Lonely Alone," "Love Left Us Strangers," "One Kind Of Lullaby"), and as crazily frenzied as some Keith Moon/Alex Van Halen fusion the next ("Where The Fucks...," the violin-laced "Hot For Krishna"—you'll get the joke when you hear it). Now, Ehrbar ain't no Dave Weckl—he's absolutely coming from rock, not fusion, after all. But you'd have to be crazy not to be swept away by the energy (and the boy does actually have a few chops) or touched by the almost Zen-like mood pieces, a couple of which don't even feature drums. *I'm* sold, anyway.

Adam Budofsky

BOOKS

GIVE THE DRUMMERS SOME!

The Great Drummers Of R&B, Punk & Soul

by Jim Payne

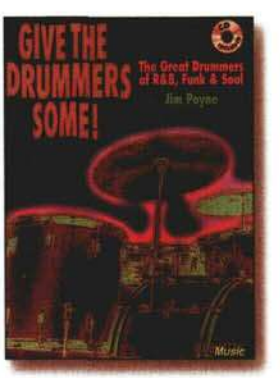
(Manhattan Music)

level: all

$29.95 (book and CD)

A truly monumental achievement, Jim Payne's *Give The Drummers Some!* sets a new standard to which future educational music books will have to aspire. Praise purpler than a Prince press release? Perhaps. But once you get into this book and realize what a labor of love it obviously was—and how entertaining and informative it is—you'll be hard-pressed not to heap on some hyperbole yourself.

Basically what we have here is a 276-page collection of interviews with many of our most important practitioners of groove drumming (Earl Palmer, James Brown's skinsmen, James Gadson, Bernard Purdie, and Greg Errico, just to name a few), interspersed with discographies, myriad photos, and analyses of their playing and the musical and cultural situations that informed it. Add to that extensive notes, a bibliography, and the topper—120 transcribed rhythms (over 60 of which are JB grooves) accompanied by the author's recorded versions of 90 of these beats—and you've got to be breaking out your calendar to book some serious time with this sucker. My only complaint is that a few top guys are absent, a concern author Payne is well aware of, but understandably was unable to control for any number of reasons. But as editor Harry Weinger suggests in his introduction, that's all the more reason to start lobbying today for Part 2.



Adam Budofsky

Now that we're well into the new year, we thought it might be fun to ask some of our top drummers and writers which albums from '96 they found the most inspiring. Many of our respondents leaped at the chance to share the CDs they've really been digging, and most went into great detail why they were so knocked out. Unfortunately we dont have the room to include their comments here. But rest assured, their enthusiasm had us running down to the record store to fill the gaps in our collections. We hope you're equally moved. (A couple of the CDs mentioned here were actually released prior to January 1,1996—but, hey, who's counting?)

PETER ERSKINE

1. Don Grolnick: *Medianoche*
drummer: Steve Berrios
percussion: Don Alias, Milton Cardona
2. Nguyen Le: *Tales From Viet-Nam*
no drummer
3. Me'Shell Ndegeocello:
Peace Beyond Passion
drummer: Oliver Gene Lake
4. Tony Williams: *Wilderness*
drummer: Tony Williams
5. Gateway: *In The Moment*
drummer: Jack DeJohnette

VINNIE PAUL

1. Marylin Manson: *Antichrist Superstar*
drummer: Ginger Fish
2. Type O Negative: *October Rust*
drummer: Johnny Kelly
3. Van Halen: *Best Of Van Halen*
drummer: Alex Van Halen
4. Red Hot Chili Peppers: *One Hot Minute*
drummer: Chad Smith
5. Deftones: *Adrenaline*
drummer: Abe Cunningham

JOHN RILEY

1. John Scofield: *Quiet*
drummers: Bill Stewart, Duduka da Fonseca
2. Tomasz Stanko: *Matka Joanna*
drummer: Tony Oxley
3. Art Blakey And The Jazz Messengers:
The Freedom Rider
drummer: Art Blakey
4. Grachan Moncur III: *Some Other Stuff*
drummer: Tony Williams

JEFF HAMILTON

1. John Scofield: *Groove Elation!*
drummer: Idris Muhammad
2. Larry Goldings: *Big Stuff*
drummer: Bill Stewart
3. Bob Mintzer:
Bob Mintzer Big Band Trane
drummer: John Riley
4. John Fedchock: *New York Big Band*
drummer: Dave Ratajczak
5. Louie Bellson:
Their Time Was The Greatest
drummer: Louie Bellson

MIKE PORTNOY

1. Steve Vai: *Fire Garden*
drummers: Deen Castronovo, Mike Mangini, Gregg Bissonette, Chris Frazier, Robin DiMaggio
2. Speck's Beard: *The Light* and *Beware Of Darkness*
drummer: Nick D'Virgilio
3. Frank Zappa: *Lather*
drummers: Terry Bozzio, Chester Thompson, various others
4. Tool: AE*nima*
drummer: Danny Carey
5. Johansson, Johansson and Holdsworth:
Heavy Machinery
drummer: Anders Johansson

STEVE SMITH

1. John Scofield: *Groove Elation!*
drummer: Idris Muhammad
2. Peter Erskine: *As It Is*
drummer: Peter Erskine
3. Bill Stewart: *Snide Remarks*
drummer: Bill Stewart
4. Rachel Z: *Room Of One's Own*
drummers: Cindy Blackman, Terri Lyne Carrington
5. Speech: *Speech*
drummers: Speech, Rick Morris, D.J. Brooks, Lil John

DENNY FONGHEISER

1. Nil Lara: Nil Lara
drummer: David Goldstein
percussionists: Lazaro Alfonso, William Vangelo, Alfredo Lugo
2. Soundgarden: *Down On The Upside*
drummer: Matt Cameron
3. Amanda Marshall: Amanda Marshall
drummer: Kenny Aronoff
4. Luscious Jackson: *Fever In Fever Out*
drummer: Kate Schellenbach
5. Garbage: *Garbage*
drummer: Butch Vig

JEFF POTTER

(MD reviewer)
1. Charlie Haden Quartet West:
Now Is The Hour
drummer: Larance Marable
2. Elvis Costello & The Attractions:
All This Useless Beauty
drummer: Pete Thomas
3. *The Secret Museum Of Mankind—Ethnic Music Classics: 1925-48 Volumes 1-4*
various drummers
4. Kenny Garrett:
Pursuance: The Music Of John Coltrane
drummer: Brian Blade
5. The Henrys: *Chasing Grace*
drummer: Michael Billard Groove

DAVID GARIBALDI

1. Michael Spiro and Mark Lamson:
Bata Ketu
drummers: Michael Spiro and Mark Lamson
2. Sergio Mendes: *Oceano*
drummers: Vinnie Colaiuta, Cesinha

PETE MAGADINI

1. Herbie Hancock: *The New Standard*
drummer: Jack DeJohnette
2. Brad Dutz: *Krin*
drummer/percussionist: Brad Dutz
3. University of North Texas One O'clock Lab Band: *Lab '96*
drummer: Rich Matschulat
4. Joe Lovano:
Quartets: Live At The Village Vanguard
drummers: Billy Hart and Lewis Nash
5. Me'Shell Ndegeocello:
Peace Beyond Passion
drummer: Oliver Gene Lake

HAL ROWLAND

(MD reviewer)
1. Beatles: *Anthology 2*
drummer: Ringo Starr
2. Beethoven:
Piano Concerto No. 5, Choral Fantasy
timpanist: John Chimes
3. Dave Holland: *Dream Of The Elders*
drummer: Gene Jackson
4. Ralph Towner: *Lost And Found*
drummer: Jon Christensen
5. Charlie Watts: *Long Ago And Far Away*
drummer: Charlie Watts

ANTON FIG

1. Nine Inch Nails: *The Downward Spiral*
drummer: Chris Vrenna
2. Joe Zawinul: *Stories Of The Danube*
percussionist: Arto Tuncboyaciyan
3. Salif Keita: *Folon... The Past*
drummer: Mokhtar Samba
4. Me'Shell Ndegeocello:
Peace Beyond Passion
drummer: Oliver Gene Lake
5. Trilok Gurtu: *Believe*
drummer: Trilok Gurtu

ADAM BUDOFSKY

(MD associate editor)
1. The **Who:**
Live At The Isle Of Wight Festival, 1970
drummer: Keith Moon
2. Beatles: *Anthology 2*
drummer: Ringo Starr
3. Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds:
Murder Ballads
drummer: Thomas Wylder
4. Steve Jansen & Richard Barbieri:
Stone To Flesh
drummer: Steve Jansen
5. Chavez: *Ride The Fader*
drummer: James Lo

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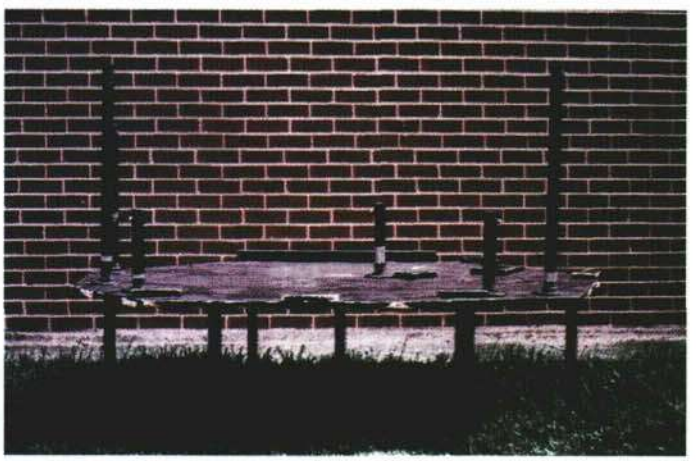
A Compact Riser/Setup

by Tom Pettit

I've proudly owned and played a 1937 Slingerland *Radio King* set for over twenty years. When I first purchased the set I refinished it myself, giving it a natural maple finish with many coats of clear gloss polyurethane.

After the amount of effort I'd put into the drums, I wanted to maximize their visual appeal by minimizing the amount of physical elements around them. At the same time, I wanted to minimize the amount of stage space taken up by the kit, *and* I wanted to elevate myself to the level of the rest of the band. To achieve all these ends, I created the compact riser and setup combination illustrated here.



The assembled riser, with legs and uprights in place, prior to the installation of drums and cymbals.

The "floor" of the riser is made of 3/4" plywood, with 1"x1" wooden "stops" screwed in for the bass drum and hi-hat. I cut seven 18" legs (for the riser) and six "uprights" of various lengths (for drum and cymbal stands) out of 1"-diameter steel pipe. I fitted a rubber cap over one end of each leg; the other end was coarse-threaded to fit into correspondingly threaded deck flanges. The uprights were also threaded at one end; the other ends were drilled and fitted with set screws to hold the upper sections of drum and cymbal stands.

After the legs and uprights were created, I set up my drums and carefully mapped out locations for deck flanges to be screwed to the top surface of the riser, where they would receive the "upright" pipes holding the drum and cymbal stands. I then reduced the overall area of the riser by cutting away all of the original 4'x8' sheet of plywood that I didn't need—as close as possible to the flanges, but without sacrificing support strength.

The locations of the leg flanges on the bottom of the riser were less critical, so I spaced six of them evenly around the perimeter. The seventh leg was placed directly beneath my seat position for additional support. I added a 2"x2" wooden stop to the back of the riser's top to keep the throne from slipping off. I finished the whole thing up by having a "skirt" made to attach to the riser with *Velcro*. The skirt hides the riser's legs from the audience and gives the whole riser/kit assembly a professional look.

This front view demonstrates the visual focus given to the drums (and the drummer) by minimizing kit hardware and riser size.

Using the riser makes certain that my setup is always the same, and also makes assembly and tear-down quicker and easier. Eliminating the heavy-duty tripod bases of my drum and cymbal stands cut the stage area I was using down by one-third, and also eliminated some of the heavy hardware I used to carry. And with this more compact setup, now the audience doesn't wonder who's singing when it's me!

This rear view shows the compact yet practical layout of the riser/drumkit assembly.

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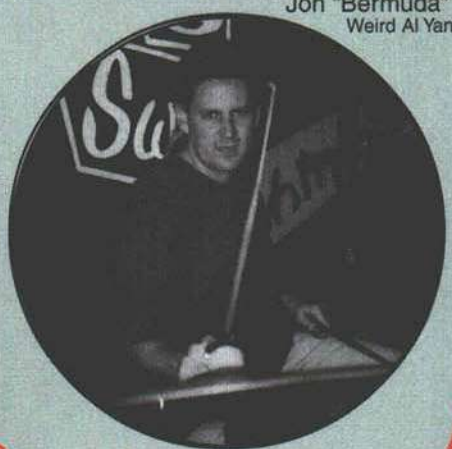
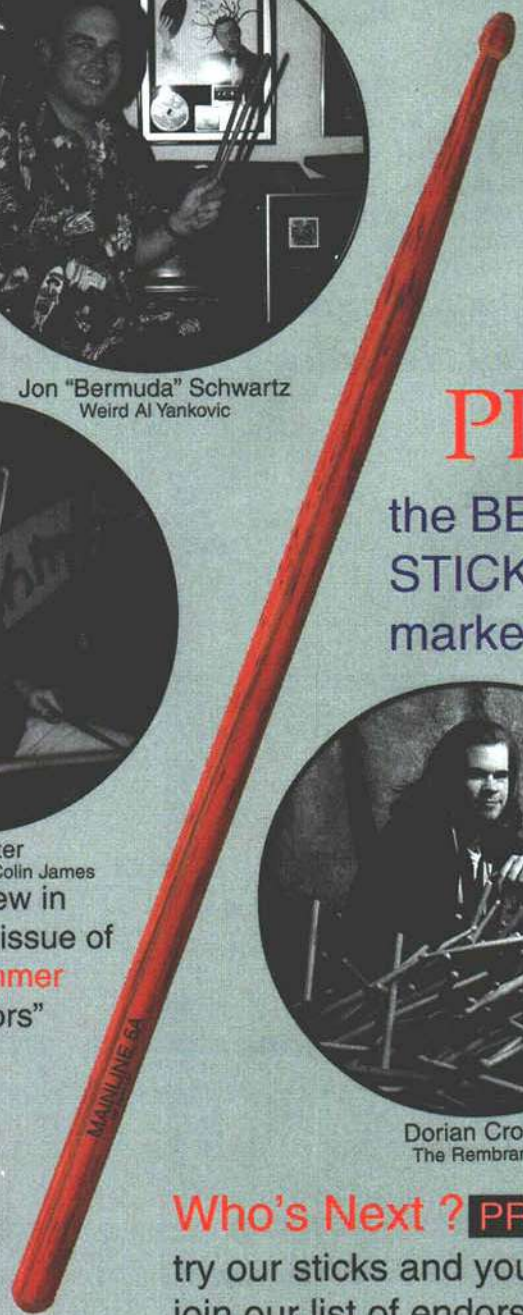


Al Webster
Long John Baldry/Colin James

check out our review in the December 96 issue of Modern Drummer "Flying Colors"

Dorian Crozier
The Rembrandts



who's next ?

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Three-Stroke Singles

by Chet Doboe

There are many techniques that drummers can use to color or highlight accents. Keeping in mind that accents are a major means of communicating our rhythmic story line, three-stroke singles is one of many options that we have to create a more interesting and articulate musical message.

Best characterized as a burst of energy attached to our accent story lines, three-stroke singles challenge us to maintain our stick control, rhythmic accuracy, and performance comfort zone,

Below are some exercises designed to improve the three-stroke, singles technique. Perform these exercises along with a metronome and strive for a uniform execution of the three-stroke singles. Also, practice these exercises with reversed sticking.

1

R L R L R L R L RLR LRL RLR LRL R L R L R L R L R LRL RLR LRL RL

2

R R R R RLR RLR R L L R L L R LRL R LRL

3

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L RLR L R L R L R LRL R L R L R L

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R LRL R L R L R L R LRL R L R L

4

RLR L R L RLR L RLR L R L RLR L R L RLR L R LRL R LRL R L

R LRL R LRL R L RLR L RLR L R L R LRL R L R L RLR LRL R L RLR L

R LRL R LRL R L RLR L RLR L RLR L RLR R LRL R L R L RLR LRL R L RLR L

R L RLR L RLR L RLR L R L RLR L
R L R LRL R LRL R L RLR L RLR L
5
12/8
R L R L R L RLR L RLR L
R L R L R L R LRL R LRL
R L R L R L R L RLR L RL
R L R L R L R L R L
6
12/8
R L R L R L R L R L R L
RLR LRL RLR LRL RLR LRL
R L R L R L R L R L R L
R LRL RLR LRL RLR LRL
7
12/8
R L R L R L R L R L R L
R LRL R LRL R LRL R LRL
R L R L R L R L R L R L
RLR L RLR L RLR L RLR L
R L R L R L R L R L R L
R L RLR L RLR L RLR L
R L R L R L R L R L R L
R LRL RLR LRL RLR LRL
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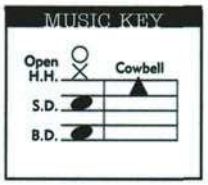
Funk Patterns With Latin Roots

by Chuck Silverman



Flow. Most styles of music have a certain movement to them, a conspicuous feel, a motion or momentum—a pulse. How about the music you enjoy? There's an undeniable flow and motion to jazz, rock, funk, and Latin music. And we, as purveyors of rhythm, are most responsible for the flow.

Studying a style of music that is all *about* flow and motion can help give you a better feel for the particular style of music you like best. I feel that popular Afro-Caribbean music, with its emphasis on dance rhythms, provides students of drums with a vast school of rhythms and a deeper understanding of flow.

Sixteenth notes in funk and 8th notes in Latin music (Afro-Caribbean music such as salsa) are the common denominators in each style of music. These common denominators allow for some very interesting original ideas. I've come up with some good-sounding and good-feeling funk patterns with roots in Latin music; some are relatively easy, obvious applications, and some are a bit more complicated. Let's examine a few.

Presented are two mambo cowbell patterns followed by drumset grooves inspired by what I call the "essence" of the bell pattern. (The mambo bell is typically played by the timbalero—the timbale player—in the chorus section of a salsa-style song.) After each bell pattern, I've indicated the "essence" pattern. Each pattern is written in 2/3 clave, and if you've been following *Latin Symposium,* you know that you can also try each application by starting on bar 2, thus playing in 3/2 clave. Following each bell pattern is a relatively simple drumset application.

These ideas are meant to provide you with a creative "seed." Take them further and develop your own original ideas. The hi-hat patterns are relatively easy. Feel free to attempt other patterns, making sure to maintain the most important concept—the feel.

1A

1B—The essence of the pattern:

1C—Drumset application:

2A

2B

2C

Now let's adapt some ideas from the accented cascara pattern. Cascara is most commonly played by the timbalero. The first pattern presented is relatively uncommon, but it is very useful and effective.

3A

3B—The essence of the pattern:

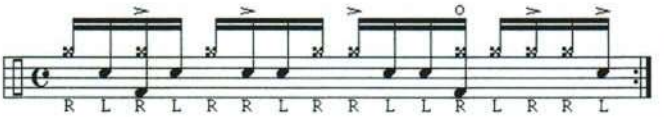
3C—This is an orchestration of the essence of the cascara pattern:

3D—This pattern is derived from the previous pattern by starting on beat "4."

4A

4B—The essence of the pattern:

4C—An orchestration of the essence:



4D—An odd-time variation:

Here's a rhythmic pattern very common in Brazilian samba. It is sometimes called samba partido alto.

5A

Here's the result of applying the pattern to the bass drum with a snare backbeat.

5B

The previous ideas are meant to give you a push into the world of Latin rhythms. I hope you try some of these grooves; if you've got some favorite music that you like to play along to, learn a couple of the grooves and try them out.

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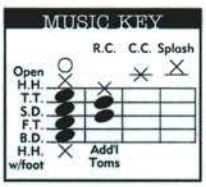
Neil Peart: "Lakeside Park"

Transcribed by Darren Haitmanek



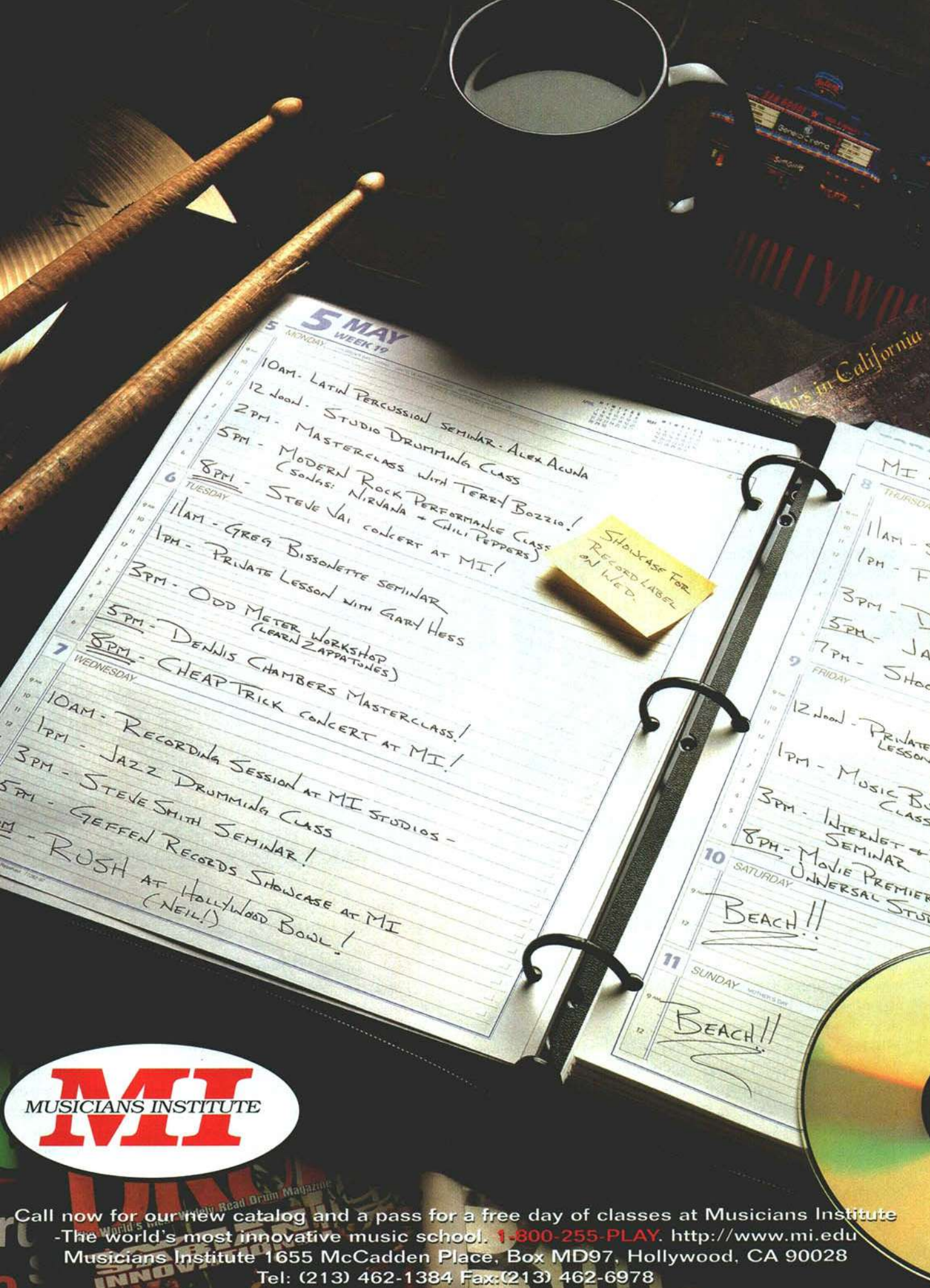
This month's *Rock Charts* takes us back over twenty years to Rush's *Caress Of Steel* album. "Lakeside Park" features a young and aggressive Neil Peart displaying not only a healthy dose of chops but some tasteful restraint as well. Neil's smooth ride cymbal work really propels the band. Also note the trademark 32nd-note "roundhouse" tom fills smattered throughout the music. It's a classic performance from one of the greats.

Paul Natkin

Time Stand Still: Neil in action in the '70s

3

2
2
2
2
2
6



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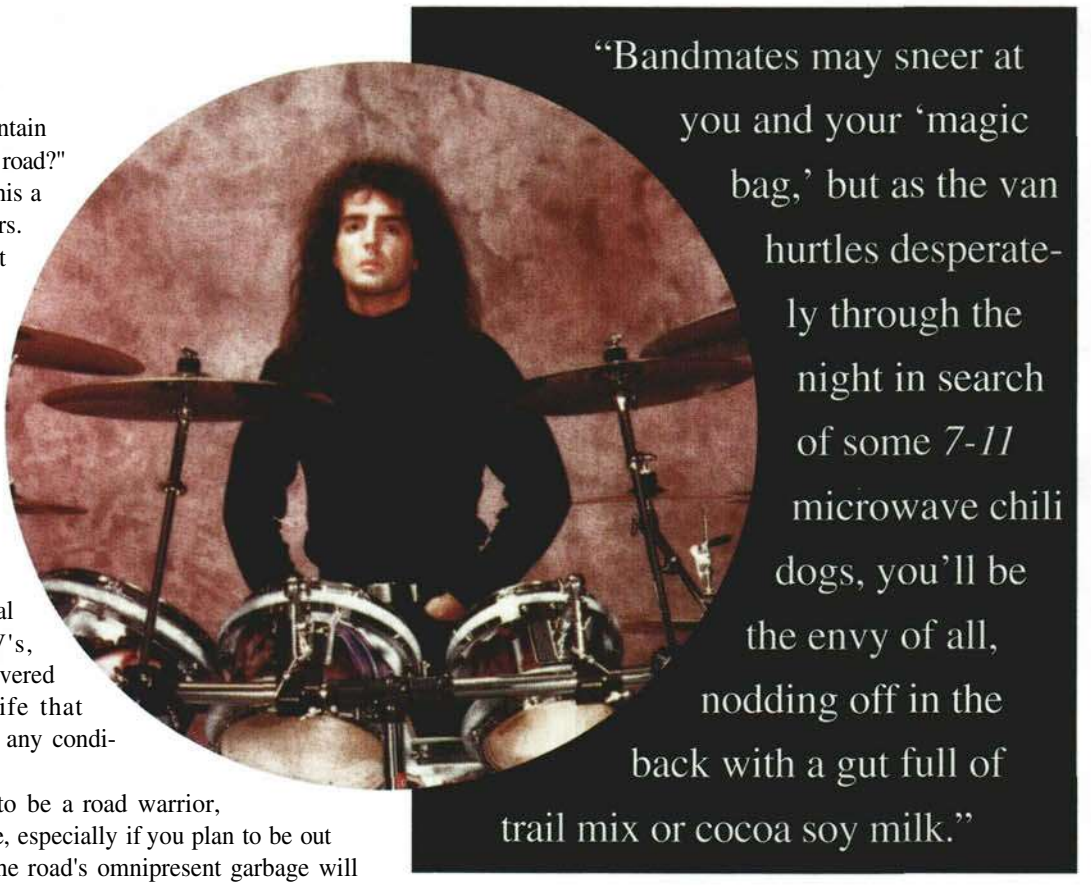
Diet For A Road Warrior

by Bobby Rock



How can you possibly maintain that diet of yours on the road?" I must have been asked this a thousand times over the years. We all know how difficult it can be to follow a healthy eating regimen at home. On the road, with all of those fast food joints beckoning, truck stops promising "home cooked" meals, and the constant lure of the gas station or airport soda and candy bar brunch, it must be hopeless, right? Not so, I say. After years of extensive global travel in buses, vans, RV's, trains, and planes, I've discovered a way to deal with road life that enables me to eat well under any condition.

I figure, if you're going to be a road warrior, you might as well eat like one, especially if you plan to be out for a while. Loading up on the road's omnipresent garbage will unquestionably trash your health in ways you might not even realize. In fact, it's usually not until after you get into this "road warrior's" way of healthy eating that you discover how much better your body operates—how much lighter you feel, how much healthier you are, how much more energy you have, and how much intensity you have to play drums with. To pull this off, all you need is a little discipline and some advanced planning.

When eating on the road, you basically have two choices: You can eat "their" food, or you can prepare your own. By "their" food, I mean the stuff offered by restaurants, hotels, airlines, or caterers. Any of these options can and will work. Sometimes. But if you rely totally on "their" food throughout the course of a tour, you're in trouble. That's why it's imperative that you have the ability to whip up your own meal or snack at any time. The focus of this article will be on the what, when, and how of doing it yourself, ensuring that wherever the tour bus (or van) stops, you're covered.

Before You Leave

For starters, accept this inevitable reality: You will be traveling slightly heavier—just an extra duffel bag and a liter bottle of spring water—but heavier nonetheless. You'll need a constant supply of quality water to keep your body properly hydrated. Unless ingesting nitrates, fluoride, and funky microorganisms from all of the different cities you visit happens to be a personal passion, tap water is out of the question. Keep your bottle of spring or distilled water handy at all times and drink from it regularly.

As for the extra duffel bag, this will become your portable kitchen. You'll want to keep it stocked with the following appliances/cooking materials:

Magic Bag Contents

A) a blender
B) a scrub brush
C) a large plastic bowl
D) a Teflon-coated kettle
E) a fork, spoon, and can opener
F) liquid soap
G) a hot plate
H) a small metal strainer
I) a juicer (optional)

Every week or so, visit a grocery store or health food market and keep a steady supply of any of the following non-perishable items in your bag:

1) fresh fruit (apples, oranges, etc.)
2) avocados
3) 8oz. 3-packs of *Vitasoy* soy milk
4) whole wheat crackers
5) *Health Valley* snack bars (many types)
6) 8oz. 3-packs of apple juice
7) *Success* brown rice
8) *Newman's Own* olive oil & vinegar dressing
9) *The Ultimate Meal* (smoothie mix)
10) *Health Valley* soups or vegetarian chili
11) spices *(Spike, Vege-sal,* sea salt, etc.)
12) organic* pasta sauce
13) carrot and celery sticks
14) soy protein powder
15) pure maple syrup (raw)
16) bananas
17) organic cup-o-soup (many types)
18) hot cereal (oatmeal, etc.)
19) pine nuts
20) trail mix (raw, unsalted)
21) organic potato or tortilla chips
22) whole wheat pasta

*Don't let the word "organic" scare you! It just means that all of the "crop-related" ingredients have been grown without the "aid" of any toxic pesticides or fertilizers. (This is good!) These companies also tend to use the highest-quality ingredients, avoiding refined sugar, white flour, etc.

Preparing Your Own

You are now completely self-contained. Whether you're in transit, backstage looking for a snack, or stuck in a hotel room on a rainy day off, you're covered. From this setup alone, look at some of your options: For a snack, you can have fresh fruit or veggies, a *Health Valley* bar, a carton of soy milk, some trail mix, chips, or crackers. For more of a meal, you can prepare some rice with your hot plate and mix in some soup or chili, cook some pasta, enjoy a smoothie (blending your *Ultimate Meal* mix with apple juice and a banana) or make a soy protein shake with your powder and soy milk. If you're traveling by bus or motor home and have access to a refrigerator or microwave, then obviously you'll have even more snack and meal choices.

Yes, you may find yourself heating up soup in a hotel room or running a blender backstage, but it's really no biggie. Total preparation time, even for your most "elaborate" dishes, is surprisingly minimal. (Just hit your practice pad while you're waiting for the water to boil.) Afterwards, you can clean, rinse, and dry your dishes in about three minutes.

Bandmates may sneer at you and your "magic bag", but as the van hurtles desperately through the night in search of some *7-11* microwave chili dogs, you'll be the envy of all, nodding off in the back with a gut full of trail mix or cocoa soy milk.

At first glance, this "do-it-yourself philosophy may seem a bit drastic. Actually, it isn't. It can be easily integrated into your touring lifestyle, affording you better health and more energy—saving you time and money in the process. Go on, give it a shot.

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Billy Gladstone Snare Drum

by Harry Cangany

The two drums pictured here represent roughly five percent of the most sought-after cache of snare drums on the planet. While the classic Ludwig *Black Beauty* is arguably still number-one as far as the sheer number of collectors and players looking for a factory-produced drum, the Billy Gladstone is the snare that has had the most meteoric rise in value. Back in the early to mid-'50s, Billy's price was a then-staggering $350. (While that may not sound like much today, it was enough then to buy an entire top-of-the-line drumset.) At press time, the most recent sale of a Billy Gladstone snare brought more than $4,000.

Billy Gladstone was known as a player's player. He went from a staff position at New York's Capitol Theater to the highly prestigious Radio City Music Hall, where he played in the pit for over twenty years. Accolades for his technique came from such other masters as Buddy Rich and one-time student Shelly Manne.

We have documented Billy's career as an inventor in earlier articles. Gretsch catalogs show his remote hi-hat and his first snare drum, the *Gretsch Gladstone*. Like the later drums pictured here, the Gretsch models had a unique tensioning system designed to help the working drummer. A special key (which attached to a plate on the drum) could be put on any one of three positions on the top tension rods. One position would allow tightening of only the top head, the second would tighten only the bottom head, and the third would tighten both heads simultaneously.

After World War II, Gretsch discontinued their *Gretsch Gladstone* drums. Billy then went into production of his own model, which he assembled in his Manhattan apartment. Over the ensuing years, the fifty or so snare drums he created have become sacred relics of the man and his precise way of doing everything.

The Billy Gladstone snare drums started as 3-ply Gretsch shells. Standard Gretsch rims were also used. But from that point on, everything was custom. Shells tended to be finished in black, birdseye, or gold; Billy disdained plastic finishes. Hardware was chrome- or gold-plated. Each drum carried an inscription plate naming the original owner. Collector Chet Falzerano has tracked down most of the Gladstones. Billy made them for Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, and Ted Reed, as well as for a host of others—an attorney, military bands, and students. The *first* Gladstone went to the late Shelly Manne. His wife, Flip, has loaned it to studio percussionist Larry Bunker to use and care for as Shelly did. Collector Les Rutledge went browsing in the now-defunct Frank Ippolito shop in New York a few years ago and bought a box of "parts." These "parts" were from a Billy Gladstone snare. Les found a treasure—and got a hearty laugh in addition. He decided to have pictures taken of everything in the box: lugs, rods, plates, screws—and a chrome gizmo that he didn't recognize but thought should be included. (After all, it *was* in the box.) The photographer stopped him and wanted to know why he wanted to have a picture of a nose-hair trimmer!

There are four complete Billy Gladstone drumsets out there in the hands of collectors like Chet Falzerano, and now a new batch of replica snares and sets have become available from Lang Percus-sion. Their existence does not in the least detract from the value of the originals.

If interest in the Gladstones does not fall, I predict they will be the second $100,000 snare drums. That's not far-fetched. Vintage *Black Beauties* are nearing the $10,000 mark in Japan now. If $500 can become $10,000 in a few short years, then $100,000 isn't too far off. And Billy's handmade works of art are right behind the leader.

Rayford Griffin

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Early Drumming Memories

by Mike Lankford

Author/drummer Mike Lankford relives the agony of his first drum lesson for the enjoyment of the general public. This is excerpted from his memoir, Life In Double Time, The Confessions Of An American Drummer, *from Chronicle Books.*

There are various stages of "ignorant," and in the very beginning I started on the ground floor like everyone else. I was fourteen when I got my first set of drums and had a hell of a time even setting them up. Professional drumsets do not come with instructions, I learned.

Then, when I finally dragged everything together and started banging and whacking and releasing all my pent-up fourteen-year-old creative spirit, it was a thrill that lasted only a few days. Two at most. The drums were louder than a bad earthquake, and this made me happy, but after a while I began to notice all my solos were rather dumb and uninteresting, and what beats I attempted to play seemed to have no regularity to them. I was a green recruit, extra green. This was the second thing I learned.

The obvious answer was to take lessons, but that was number three on my personal list. It took the intervention of my mother and her sketchy knowledge of the music business before I finally made a phone call and hired a teacher.

Inside three days I had a real, live drummer standing in my garage: long hair, necklace, beard, open shirt, using words like "hip" and "cool," all of which impressed me enormously. This was October 1968. His name was Rod Roadruck and he was probably, to the best of my limited knowledge, the best drummer in town.

What I remember most after the introduction and polite chit-chat was him taking my sticks and sitting down where I had sat only a moment before and converting those previously uncooperative drums into a musical instrument. They changed before my very eyes from a collected mass of hardware to a coherent whole. With the same attitude that a person might kick the tire of a car, Rod took the sticks and ran a little test pattern over my drums to see how they sounded, playing fifteen of the most complicated licks I'd ever heard up close: fills opening and closing with shifting accents from one hand to the other, moving all over the set with ease and generating a huge surge of energy in me.

> "I played like a drunk octopus. Half the time I couldn't even find the snare drum—and it was between my legs!"

"Now," he said finally, wiping the sweat off his face, "it's your turn," and he got up off the stool and had me sit down.

I was real slow about it. Suddenly it seemed I knew even less than I did half an hour before. My ignorance was growing, not shrinking. The seat felt warm and the sticks moist, and I was starting to doubt myself in a big way.

"The first thing is how you hold your sticks. Show me how you grip the sticks." He handed them to me and they lay in my hands like two dead fish. "You seem to use a matched grip. You have a choice here. You can hold them both the same way, which is how most rock drummers do it, or you can hold the left stick like this," and he moved the butt of the stick from the heel of his hand to the joint between thumb and forefinger. "There are advantages to both. This is more of a jazz grip. You have added control this way, but you lose power. Which way do you want to go?"

I thought about it a moment and then asked, "Which is easier?"

He shook his head like a fly had just buzzed through. "Easy has nothing to do with it. It's a matter of playing style. A matched grip is more for hard hitting—if you want to slap 2 and 4, then you hold the stick like a club—the jazz grip gives you more bounce and finesse. You can always switch back and forth. I do. It depends on the song. If you want to play mostly rock 'n' roll let's go with the matched grip for now."

"Yeah...rock 'n' roll," I said, but it sounded weak.

"Fine. Now, tighten up your grip a little bit but not too much. Don't choke the stick. Play some and let me watch you." I started flailing away, nailing everything in sight. He stopped me almost at once. "Fine, good. I just wanted to see how you hold the sticks.

"Now, I'm going to show you one thing today I want you to practice. Don't worry about playing fancy solos or songs, just practice this one thing until you've got it right. It's a beat, and one you can play, so don't worry about it. Get up and I'll show you."

We traded places and then he began

playing the world's simplest beat, one so unimpressive I didn't see any reason to learn it. "Practice this beat and the rest will come later. It's very simple. The bass drum plays a straight line: 1, 2, 3, 4. Just start the bass drum going, nothing hard. Boom, boom, boom, boom. Then on top of that you put the accents on the snare drum. The accents are on 2 and 4. So: boom, pop, boom pop...like that. Got it? Your left foot plays along with your left hand: close the hi-hat at the same time you play the snare. Your right hand keeps time on the cymbal. You're playing 8th notes. Do you know what that means?"

I started to guess but he cut me off. "It means there's eight of them to a measure. Just count to eight. Do you know what a measure is, one bar?" He was testing to see how deep my knowledge of music was. I could've saved him the trouble. I was wondering why he only counted to eight and not ten. "Doesn't matter. Lots of drummers don't read music. The cymbal is twice as fast as the bass drum and the bass drum is twice as fast as the snare drum." He did it again and made it look idiot-simple.

So I tried it and my humiliation was complete. No amount of bluff or positive thinking could get me through that beat. I could not get the different limbs of my body to cooperate. "Slow down and just play the parts," he'd say, talking over my shoulder. "Start with the cymbal, get that going, then add the bass drum." I started it fifty times and eventually I had a primitive version under way. Then he told me to add the snare drum. I told him the snare drum wouldn't fit. I had too much going with the right hand and right foot to think about adding the left hand too, but he insisted. He had me break it down again, playing slowly, until finally I had both hands and both feet going all at once.

But it was rough, very rough. My left foot insisted on jumping off the hi-hat pedal every other beat and getting tangled up in the stand. Not every snare note coincided with the bass drum. At my best, I could hold the whole contraption together a few seconds before I'd wake up to how complicated it was, and then one part or another of my body would fail me. Each time he had me start again and each time I began with the right hand on the cymbal, then added the right foot on the bass drum, tentatively bringing in the left hand on the snare drum and left foot before it would all start to crumble and stop. This beat was complex beyond belief, like trying to juggle balls and tap dance and sing hallelujah all at once. We stayed with this routine until I was too tired to lift my arms anymore.

"You'll get it," he said. "You just have to practice every day and eventually it will come. Believe me."

I worked on my one beat. I worked that one beat for twenty solid hours over the next week and found I had no aptitude for it. Simple beats are, in a sense, the hardest to play. They require precision and finesse. You can't bluff your way through a simple beat. Every note counts in a simple beat. The body must move in a fluid fashion, firing off those single notes in an emphatic way. I played like a drunk octopus. Half the time I couldn't even find the snare drum—and it was between my legs. If I paid attention to the right hand on the cymbal, my left hand would become forgetful and go into a coma. If I concentrated on the bass drum, my cymbal would jump off the beat.

For hours at a time, different problems rotated among my four limbs. But I stuck with it. That is all I can say in my favor. I played that boom, pop, boom, pop proposition over and over every night until I was called in to bed. My mother stood up well to all this. I could see the years passing over her face, the jerky look in her eye, the fatigue that showed in the dark circles she'd developed, wrinkles getting deeper by the minute. I'm not sure I could've listened to that idiot repetition without murdering the cause of it.

Saturday came again, the day of my second lesson. I'd practiced all morning trying to nail down that beat, to get it in some sort of decent shape to show him. I was tired and irritable when he walked in the door.

"Hi, sport. Sounds good."

I looked at him with a deep suspicion.

"Play it for me again and let's see what you've got."

I fired it up one more time. I started the right hand on the cymbal, laying down the count, added the bass drum and everything was going fine, but as soon as I stuck in the left hand and left foot things got wobbly and uncertain again. I lost the tempo first, then my left foot jumped off the hi-hat,

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then the bass drum sped up while the snare slowed down. It all hung together for maybe an instant before collapsing once more.

"Good!" he said. "That's much better than last week. You keep practicing that beat and I guarantee it will come easy as breathing in no time."

He sounded sarcastic to me and this was unnecessary. I did not find it motivating. It may be that these things were easy for him, but then he obviously had a natural gift of large proportions. I now knew I had no such large gift. In fact, I suspected I might have a musical impairment. If I'd really learned anything in the past week it was that my drumming abilities were modest and that it would take six months to learn each single thing I needed to know. In five years I might be eligible to play my first song.

"Now today I'm going to show you two more things. I'm going to show you another beat you can practice, and I'll show you a fill."

Things became vague and I felt weak again. I knew I couldn't keep up with such a high-speed teacher for long. We traded places and Rod sat down at the drums. "Okay, here's your beat." And before he even stopped talking the beat was flowing out of his hands and feet, natural as water from a hose. "What you want to do," he said over the playing, "is add an extra note on the snare drum...like this." And with one note he transformed that groveling humiliation of a beat I couldn't yet play into a rhythm with snap and swing to it: boom, pop pop, boom, pop; boom, pop pop, boom, pop.

He played it over and over while I watched him. It looked sim-

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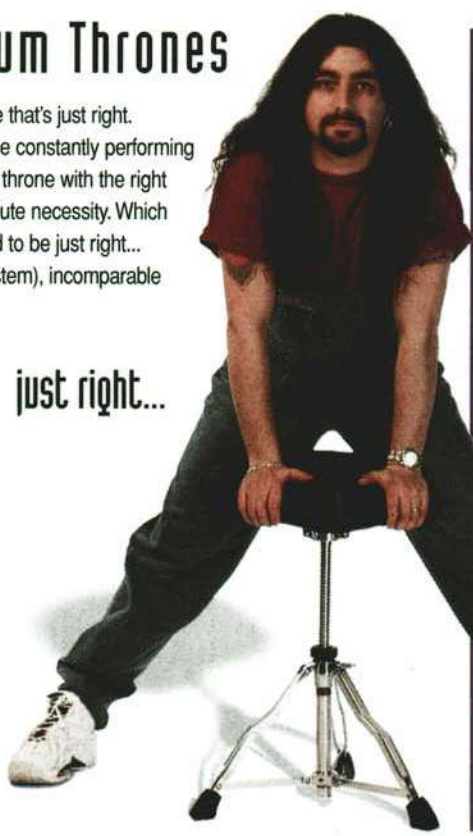

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pie enough but for the life of me I couldn't figure out exactly where he was placing that extra snare note. It didn't seem to fall on top of any other note in the beat but instead was dropped into one of the open spaces. Finally I asked him and he said, "It's only a problem if you think about it. It's like dribbling a basketball: If you think about each single bounce, you can't do it. And if you try to run and dribble and think about every single step and bounce and push, you'd fall on your face. You just have to learn to 'do it.'"

This was a new confusion. One I was not supposed to think about. The science of drumming was deeper than anything I'd encountered in my fourteen years.

Then while playing the beat over and over, he inserted a fill. It was a simple fill, even I could tell that, but he didn't stop the beat to play it. Instead, he played the fill on *top* of the beat, like slapping a sticker on a moving train. I lost all hope. My humility spread out and acquired a new dimension. "How in the world am I supposed to do that?" I wondered.

"You will," he said. "Trust me; you will. It's just a matter of practice."

And he was right. Barely. He wasn't right for several weeks, but eventually his prophecy came true. I went through eighteen stages of depression and sweated buckets and came close to quitting almost daily, but finally the remarkable happened. I did learn the beat—both beats in fact, and the fill. And he was also right about not thinking too much about it all. I discovered—in an early and inarticulate way—that the playing of an instrument cannot be deliberate. That to think too much about what you're doing is to handicap yourself and sound musically wooden. The muscles must learn on their own, the body develops its own coordination, while your attention goes entirely to the overall effect you're producing.

I eventually began changing from an unenlightened larva-drummer to the beginnings of a butterfly. Not a whole butterfly yet, but one with a single wing and the ability to slowly twirl his stick.

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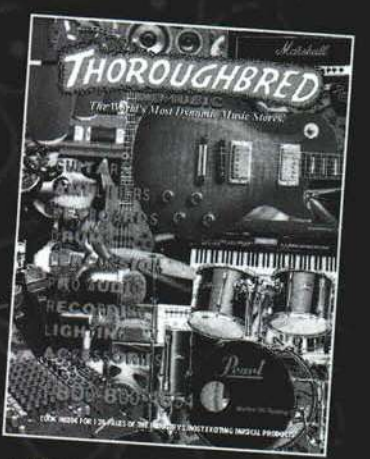

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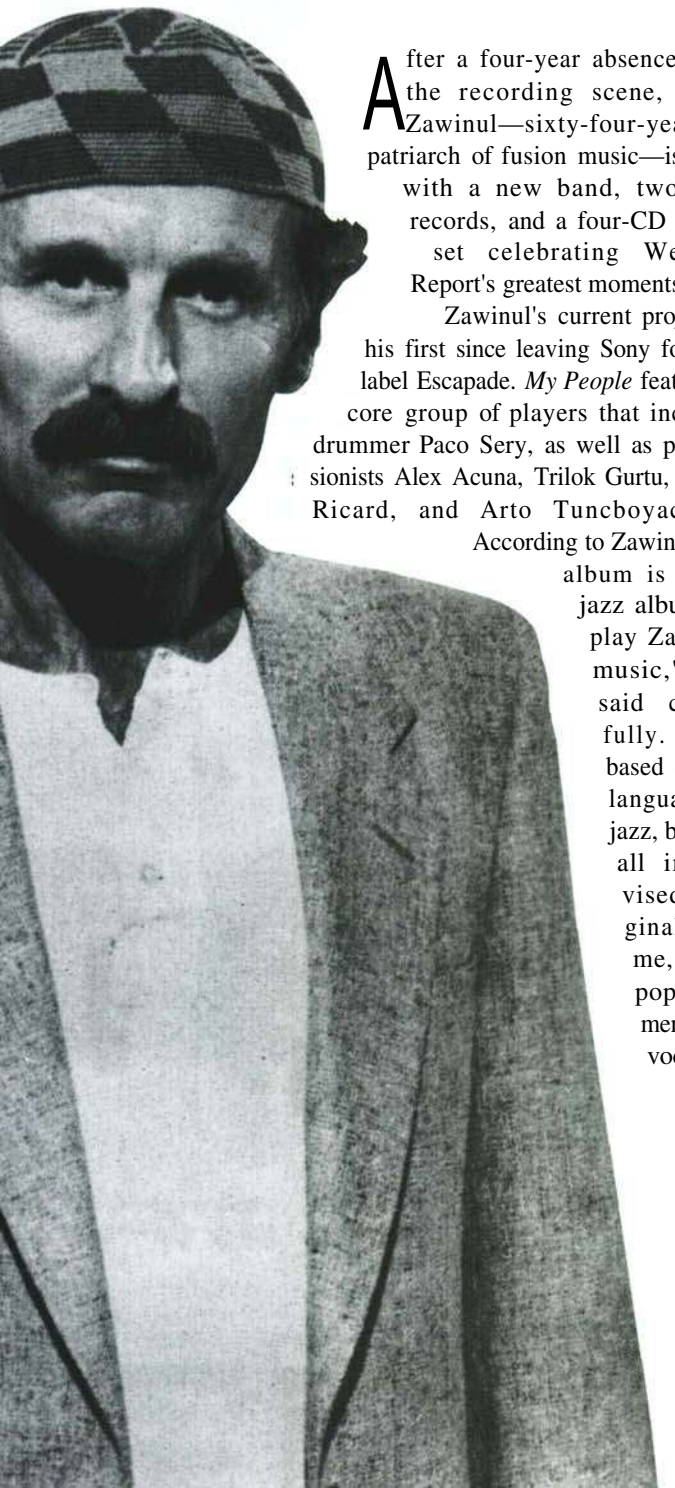


After a four-year absence from the recording scene, Josef Zawinul—sixty-four-year-old patriarch of fusion music—is back with a new band, two new records, and a four-CD boxed set celebrating Weather Report's greatest moments.

Zawinul's current project is his first since leaving Sony for new label Escapade. *My People* features a core group of players that includes drummer Paco Sery, as well as percussionists Alex Acuna, Trilok Gurtu, Kevin Ricard, and Arto Tuncboyaciyan. According to Zawinul, the album is not a jazz album: "I play Zawinul music," Joe said cheerfully. "It's based on the language of jazz, but it is all improvised originally by me, with pop elements and vocals."

Weather Report formed out of a friendship between keyboardist Zawinul and saxophonist Wayne Shorter, who met in 1959. In 1969 they recorded two pivotal albums with Miles Davis: *In A Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew.* Then Wayne left Miles' group and Zawinul turned down the keyboard chair so that they could create a band together. The original lineup featured Miroslav Vitous on bass, Alphonse Mouzon on drums, and Airto on percussion. Airto, like many who recorded with Weather Report, never toured with the group. Dom Urn Romao became the quintet's percussionist for the next four years, and added what Joe called the "showbiz" of the group. "He jumped around and played many instruments," says Joe. "He was a real crowd-pleaser compared to other jazz musicians of that period, who would just sit and play.

"Alphonse Mouzon was a very good drummer who could read Wayne's and my music," Joe continues. "There were problems, though—not musical, but personal. On one tour of Europe the English baritone sax player John Surman, Alan Skidmore, and a trombone player did a radio broadcast with the group. Alphonse insulted them; he told them they couldn't play. Alphonse had an ego, which is not always a bad thing for a musician. But Surman felt that the criticism was coming from Wayne and me, and there were a lot of bad feelings as a result. So we hired Eric Gravatt. Eric was incredible."

On the second Weather Report album, *I Sing The Body Electric,* the live suite on side two was just part of a Japanese release called *Weather Report In Japan.* On tunes like Zawinul's "Directions," Gravatt explodes with a sizzling cymbal attack and complex comping on the snare. On the studio tracks, Gravatt and Dom Um Romao create (along with Zawinul, Shorter, and Vitous) one of the few contemporary examples of "collective improvisation." Or, as Zawinul once told *Down Beat,* "We never solo; we always solo."

On the third recording, *Sweetnighter,* Zawinul recorded a rhythm that has now been sampled on over fifty different hip-hop records. In characteristic style Zawinul takes credit for inventing this pulse. "We had to bring another drummer (Hershall Dwellingham) into the studio to record '125th Street Congress' and the 3/4 hip-hop song 'Boogie Woogie Waltz.' Eric's bass drum wasn't happening. He was unhappy with the situation, and he finally left the group." Even though Gravatt was in the group for fewer than two complete recordings, Zawinul says that of all the drummers who played with Weather Report, Gravatt was his favorite. "He was a *musician* who played the drums. He was also a rebel. I really liked working with him."

Wayne Shorter's cousin Ishmael Wilburn next joined the group for the album *Mysterious Traveler*—which was the first to feature synthesizer versus wah-wahed Fender Rhodes piano. On the opening track, "Nubian Sundance" (recorded live at a festival), the beat is a proto hip-hop beat known to the bandmembers as the "Zawa-Beat." It's played like a half-time shuffle, with many grace notes and a snare hit on 3. Other songs on the album featured double drumset playing along with Dom on percussion. Darryl Brown appeared briefly with Weather Report during this period, but he left, according to Zawinul, to become a brain surgeon! Greg Errico of Sly & The Family Stone played some live dates with the group during this same period. According to Zawinul, "Greg played the hip-hop rhythm on 'Boogie Woogie Waltz' better than any Weather Report drummer before or since. He was a great musician."

> "I'm married to the hi-hat when I play. It's the only thing in my monitor when I play live."

On *Tale Spinning* the band's sound changed dramatically, incorporating funk and African rhythms and heavy use of synthesizers. New bassist Alphonso Johnson and studio drummers Ndugu Leon Chancier laid down a barrage of rhythms underneath Shorter's soprano sax and Zawinul's keyboards. "Ndugu was too busy," laughs Zawinul. "But hell, I find most drummers too busy. We still wanted him to tour with us. But in those days the money wasn't too good, and he had a good thing going with Carlos Santana. So Alphonso suggested Chester Thompson, who had just left Frank Zappa. I remember the first night Chester played with us: We were at the Bottom Line in New York City. Miles was in the front row, and he stood on his chair and led a standing ovation. It was great. Chester played on *Black Market,* which featured a tune in 11 with Alex Acuna. Narada Michael Walden also recorded two songs for that album, but he didn't tour with us."

The entrance of another legendary Weather Report musician is one of Zawinul's most vivid memories. "One night while we were playing in Florida this kid comes running up to me after a show and says, 'Mr. Zawinul, my name is John Francis Pastorius the Third, and I'm the greatest bass player in the world.' I thought he was nuts, but he came to my hotel the next day and we talked. He wrote to me for the next six months and sent me a tape of the Charlie Parker song 'Donna Lee.' I asked him if he could play electric bass, and he said it *was* electric: fretless. When Alphonso left the band to join a group with Billy Cobham and George Duke, we invited Jaco to join. He and Chester didn't fit together totally, so Jaco suggested that Alex play drums. We hired Manola Badrena on percussion.

"Going into rehearsals for the next album, the band was kind of down-hearted. No one knew what direction to go. Jaco wanted to go more 'out.' I brought in a song I had written in honor of Dinah Washington called 'Birdland,' and Alex said, 'We got our first hit!' The album sold 600,000 copies [since its release on CD it has sold an estimated 800,000] based on that one tune—but *all* the tunes were great. Every member of the group wrote tunes on that album. 'Teen Town' became Jaco's trademark solo piece; Wayne brought in 'Palladium'; Badrena and Alex did a live duet on 'Rumba Momma.' Five of our best-known tunes were on that album. Jaco liked playing with Alex because Alex had this slip-

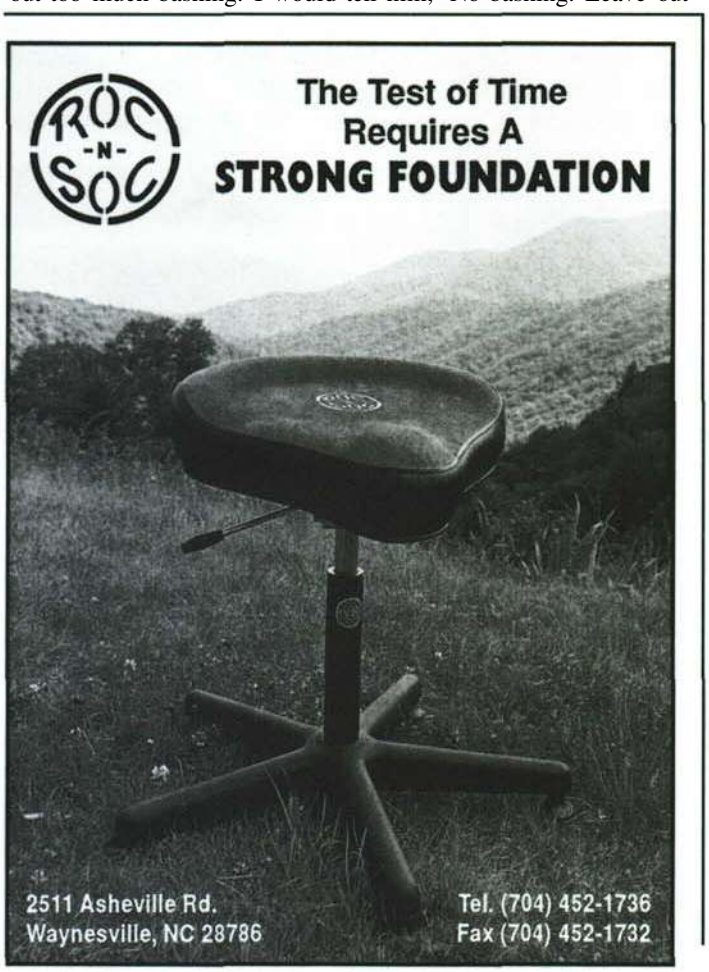
Tom Copi

Weather Report salad days: Zawinul, Shorter, Pastorius, and Erskine in 1978

pery way of playing across the bar. Chester was more vertical; very up and down. But Alex could slide through the parts of a song. I originally wanted 'Birdland' to be a shuffle, but that didn't happen in the studio. Later on, though, Alex nailed it with the blues bebop groove heard on '8:30' as played by Peter Erskine."

The next Weather Report album was the often critically condemned *Mr. Gone.* With drumming by Steve Gadd, Tony Williams, Peter Erskine, and Jaco, and percussion and overdubbed hi-hat, the album was a studio creation that almost buried Wayne Shorter in its wash of keyboards. However, several classic tunes came out of this record; "Punk Jazz" and "Young And Fine" are covered by jazz groups to this day. "Tony Williams' playing was an overdub situation," says Zawinul, "but I liked what he did with our music. When I showed one beat to Steve Gadd he said *I* should play the drums on it! Jaco had a unique feel on the drumset; no one could play like him. For example, the beat on Teen Town' [*Heavy Weather*] could only have been played by him. Peter Erskine was this young big band phenom. We invited him to join the group after this recording."

The double album that followed, *8:30,* featured both live and studio tracks—and won a jazz Grammy. This was the core quartet live, with Erskine playing timpani and some percussion. "Peter is a hell of a drummer," enthuses Zawinul. "His bass-drum playing didn't always lock in; he had a different concept. But he was coming from big band and he could read. To me, the drums are like a little orchestra: cymbals, toms, snare, bass, and hi-hat. Balance is very important, and Peter could swing into a song's climax without too much bashing. I would tell him, 'No bashing. Leave out the cymbals.' When cymbals are played too loudly you lose the attack and the sizzle of a ride cymbal. You get white noise instead of music."



The next two Weather Report recordings added percussionist Bobby Thomas, Jr., a friend of Jaco, to the quartet. On the self-named album *Weather Report* (not the first album of that name, but the first with that title released by Columbia) Joe brought in some songs with Linn drum machine tracks. "I liked to replace the machine parts with Peter and Bobby," he says, "but some things got left in. The hi-hat is very important to me. I comp on my left hand to it, and I can say I'm married to the hi-hat when I play. It's the only thing in my monitor when I play live." Zawinul was writing almost unplayable hi-hat parts (until Omar Hakim came along), and Erskine, Thomas, and the Linn added a barrage of syncopation to the group's sound. Combined with Jaco's 16th-note pulse and Zawinul's keyboard bass parts, this version of the group had a white-hot intensity, captured best on the live track "Madagascar" (from *Night Passage).* "When Jaco wanted to take a year off for his Word Of Mouth band," Zawinul recalls, "Wayne and I decided to start with a new band. Omar Hakim was a great drummer who could compose parts while playing. There was one song, 'Two Lines,' where he came up with the drum part as the song progressed." Hakim would record the next three albums—*Procession, Domino Theory,* and *Sportin' Life*—as well as one track on *This Is This.* Bassist Victor Bailey and Mino Cinelu rounded out this later version of the group.

This Is This was a transitional album made under the name of Weather Update. Shorter was absent for most of the tracks, and Erskine was back in the band and co-producing. Says Zawinul, "I formed Weather Update with Erskine, Victor, Bobby Thomas, and Steve Khan on guitar. I didn't pick the name; some promoters wanted it. After two tours I formed my current group, the Zawinul Syndicate. The drummer I have now is the best I've ever worked with: Paco Sery. He can turn the beat around without over-arranging it. He also plays an awesome kalimba."

Are there any drummers Joe would like to have played with? "There's still Eric Gravatt. I played with Al Foster and Art Blakey, and I'd have liked to work more with them. Louis Hayes from Cannonball's group was the only drummer I know who could bring it way low during a piano solo without losing any of his intensity. His hi-hat was special."

With his new group, the Syndicate, Zawinul has worked with Cornell Rochester, Michael Baker, and Rodney Holmes. "Michael could read anything and was a world-class singer. He would come down from the drumset and Bobby Thomas would play traps behind him."

What does Zawinul look for in a drummer? "Again," he replies, "I look for a musician who plays drums. I like ensemble players with an elastic beat. I hate drum solos. There aren't any on the Weather Report albums, because I think drum solos are boring! But I let some drummers play them live. I told Peter Erskine, 'Don't play 16th-note tom fills across the set; it's too fusion-sounding. Play things not on the turnaround, but on the setup. Take over the band, but don't overplay, don't bash. The groove and the hi-hat are what matters to me and my music.'"

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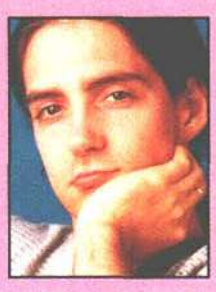

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Another Big Bang: PASIC '96, Nashville, TN

The Percussive Arts Society throws a four-day party every year and invites some of the best drummers, percussionists, and manufacturers over for a bash. Well, last November drum lovers flocked in droves to Music City for the PAS convention—a whopping 6,700 of 'em. None were disappointed.

The large exhibit area at the convention offered 120 manufacturers room to spread out their coolest new gear. We played. The convention also featured nearly 100 clinics covering a broad spectrum of percussion instruments and topics. We learned.

Drumset fans had *a lot* thrown at them. Three clinicians in particular turned heads: Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, Akira Jimbo. and JoJo Mayer had a bit of a coming-out party, each wowing unsuspecting audiences with their tremendous chops. Peter Erskine, who presented a fun master class on approaching music with an open attitude, commented that Hernandez and Jimbo have "raised the bar" in terms of four-way coordination, each playing and soloing over left-foot clave. And Swiss phenom JoJo Mayer displayed some of the fastest hands seen since Buddy (with excellent single bass technique to boot!). All three gentlemen are destined for "drum god" status.

Memorable quotes, as well as clinics, were provided by Chester Thompson ("Listen to your drumming from the audience's perspective"); Kalani ("Don't be afraid to explore hand drumming rhythms on your drumset"); Robin DiMaggio ("Groove is where the money's at"); Jim Rupp ("Think of playing swing as laying down an unrelenting pulse"); Jim Chapin ("I think of my sticks as glorious, golden steeds"), and Paul Leim ("If you're not half an hour early for a session, you're late").

Other solid clinics were given by Gregg Bissonette (who performed a musical tribute to Ringo), Eddie Buyers, Gregg Field, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Ed Shaughnessy, Charlie Adams. Ignacio Berroa, and Skip Hadden. High marks go especially to John Riley, who gave an excellent master class focusing on the playing of Elvin Jones—great material that was clearly explained. Good stuff!

The most grooving clinic, though, came from the Allman Brothers rhythm section—Butch Trucks, Jaimoe, and Marc Quinones. They laid it *down.* New to the clinic game, these three spared the talking and played some of those classic, ramblin' grooves that have propelled their band to legendary status. Actually, Butch had a down-to-earth comment that best summed up a PAS convention: "I ain't never seen so many people with twitches!"

For those interested in attending PAS's next bash, it will be held in Anaheim, California, November 19-22. For further info contact the Percussive Arts Society, P.O. Box 25, Lawton, OK 73502, (405)353-1455.

Photos by Rick Malkin

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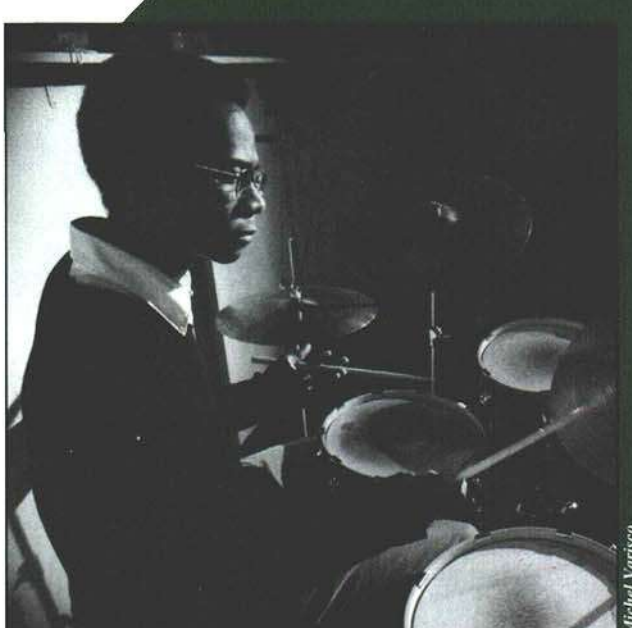
Drumkit Of The Month

Kent Etter of Fort Wayne, Indiana decided to combine his two passions—drumming and collecting *Coca-Cola* memorabilia—into one project. The result was this highly distinctive kit. "It started out as three separate kits, dating from the '60s and '70s," says Kent. "I stripped all the old coverings off the shells, and replaced them with *Coke* banners I obtained through a friend who worked for the company. Then I located as much matching hardware as possible to give the kit a consistent look. The set is completed by a combination of Zildjian and Sabian cymbals, and it's a *lot* of fun to play. After all, after drumming, *Coke* is it!"

Next Month



Michel Varisco

Joshua Redman's
Brian Blade

Rusted Root's
Jim Donovan & Jim DiSpirito

Dony Wynn
Of Brooks & Dunn

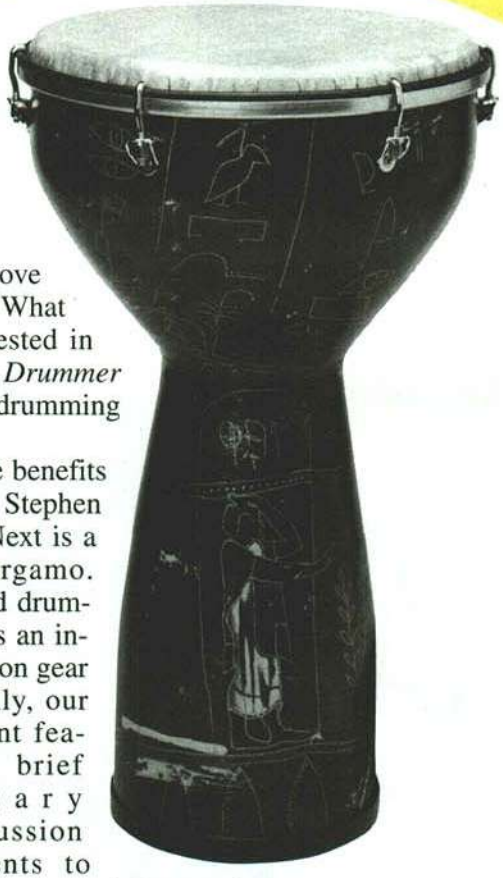
Jimmy Crawford
From The Past

Marilyn Manson's
Ginger Fish

MODERN DRUMMER'S

World Percussion And Hand Drumming Supplement

Hand drumming and world percussion has banged, bashed, and thumped its way into popular consciousness over the past few years. In fact, if Nigerian hand-drumming master Babatunde Olatunji is correct, there'll be a drum in every American household by the end of the century. Wishful thinking? Well, maybe, but there's certainly no denying the impact that hand drumming has made upon drummers and non-drummers alike.



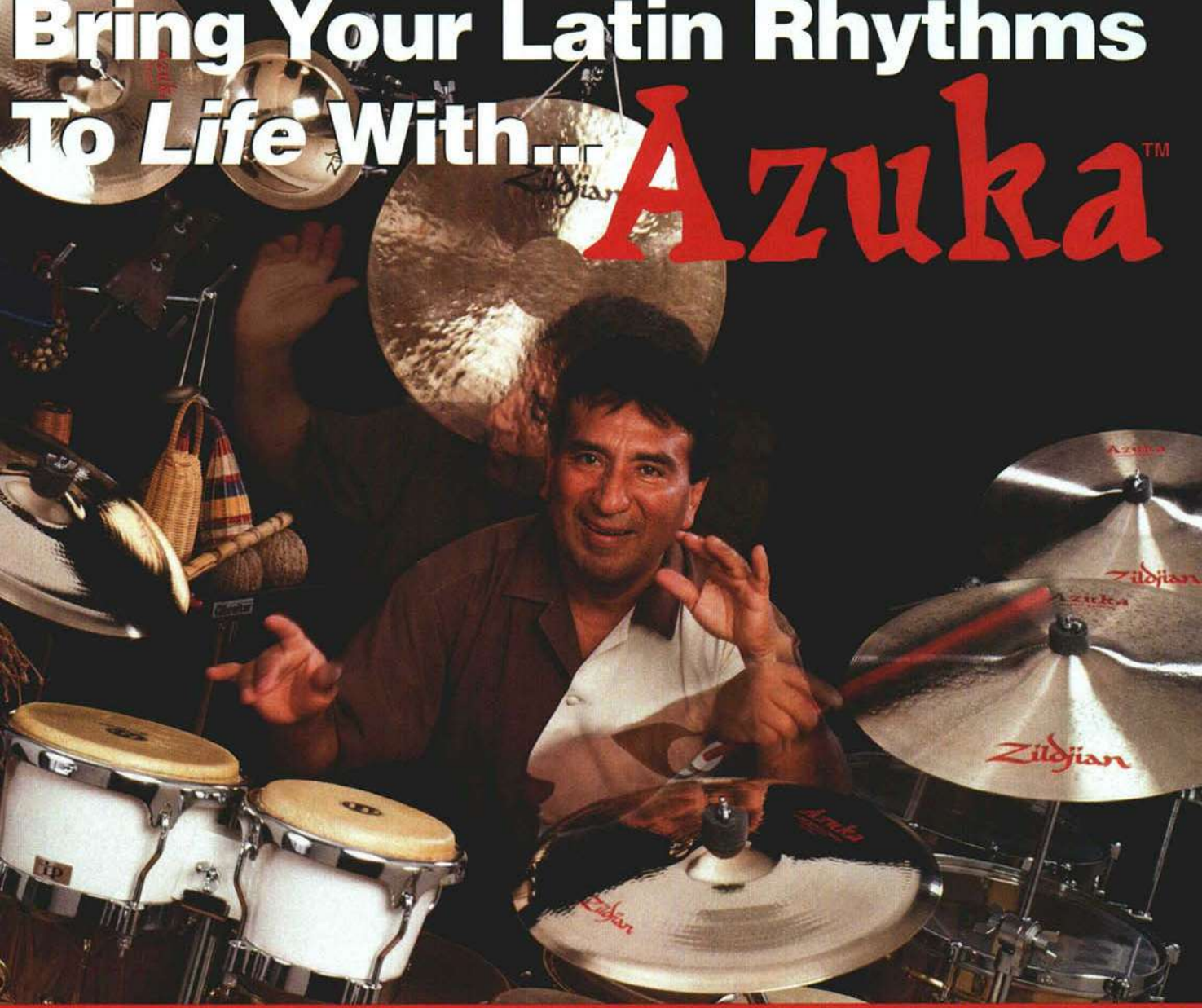
This percussion focus can only be good news for musicians who love drumming, but how does it affect the contemporary drumset player? What benefits does it provide to the drummer? How does someone interested in hand drumming get started? To answer these questions, we at *Modern Drummer* decided to focus our first magazine supplement on the topic of hand drumming and world percussion.

This supplement is broken into five sections. The first deals with the benefits of hand drumming for the drumset player. Neil Peart, Terry Bozzio, Stephen Perkins, and others weigh in on how it has impacted their playing. Next is a basic hand drum technique article by master-teacher John Bergamo. Following that is a resource guide featuring some of today's top hand drummers and the recordings, videos, and books they've produced. Next is an in-depth look at some of the hottest new percussion gear available. Finally, our supplement features a brief glossary of percussion instruments to help take some of the mystery out of what these unique instruments are and where they come from.

We've focused this supplement specifically for you, the serious drumset player. We hope that you enjoy it and that it inspires you to further investigate this ever-expanding percussive universe we live—and drum—in.

William F. Miller
Features Editor

Bring Your Latin Rhythms To *Life* With... Azuka™



rto *(Fourth World)* • **Manolo Badrena** *(Eyewitness)* • **Julio Barreto** *(Gonzalo Rubalcaba)* • **Cyro Batista** *(Paul Simon)* • **Ignacio Berroa** *(Latin Great)* • **Edwin Bonilla** *(Gloria Estefan)* • **Mino nelu** *(Latin Great)* • **Luis Conte** *(Latin Great)* • **Daduka DaFonseca** *(Herbie Mann)* • **Lalo Davila** *(Latin Great)* • **Sa Davis** *(Berklee School)* • **Debra Dobkin** *(Bonnie Raitt)* • **Julio Figueroa** *(Enrique Iglesias)* • **Sammy Figueroa** *(N.Y. Studio Ace)* • **Trilok Gurtu** *(World Percussion Virtuoso)* • **Sue Hadjopoulos** *(Joe Jackson)* • **Horacio Hernandez** *(Michel Camilo)* • **Giovanni Hidalgo** *(Conga Virtuoso)* • **Victor Loyo** *(Luis Miguel)* • **Victor Mendoza** *(Berklee School)* • **Ron Powell** *(Kenny G)* • **Alejo Poveda** *(Latin Great)* • **Marc Quinones** *(Allman Bros)* • **Vicki Randle** *(Jay Leno)* • **Michito Sanchez** *(L.A. Studio Ace)* • **Terry Santiel** *(Janet Jackson)* • **Robertinho Silva** *(Milton Nascimento)* • **Efrain Toro** *(Latin Great)* • **Chris Trujillo** *(L.A. Studio Ace)* • **Arto Tuncboyaciyan** *(Zawinul Syndicate)* • **Ed Uribe** *(Ray Barreto)* • **Mark Walker** *(Carribean Jazz Project)*

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Remo World Percussion Artists (from left to right): Mickey Hart, Chalo Eduardo, Leon Mobley, Layne Redmond, Arthur Hull and Poncho Sanchez.

HAND DRUMMING AND THE DRUMSET PLAYER

BY RICK MATTINGLY

However happy drumset players are with their chosen instrument, most have found themselves at one time or another envying colleagues whose instruments are considerably more portable. It's not just a matter of the problems associated with hauling around and setting up a large drumkit; it's also a matter of being able to express yourself musically at any time and in any place. Whereas an acoustic guitar can go wherever the guitarist goes, drumset players generally have to go where the drumset is.

For that reason, many drumset players have become involved with hand drums. Not only does hand drumming provide opportunities for musical expression in situations where a drumset would not be practical, but many have found that hand drumming benefits their drumset playing in a variety of ways.

Porno For Pyros drummer Stephen Perkins says that a pair of bongos allowed him to be more involved in his group's songwriting and also led to a different approach in the studio. "We wrote a lot of our songs on the beach during a trip to Bali and Fiji, and I didn't have access to a drumset until a month later, when we got back to America," he says. "As we were creating the songs, I came up with a lot of little melodic parts on the bongos, and when we went in the studio, a typical kick/snare beat just didn't hold up. So I brought the bongos into almost every beat to get away from just using trapkit.

"Hand drumming has positively changed my approach to the kit. I think so differently now in terms of orchestration. When someone in the band brings in a new song, I don't immediately say, 'Okay, check out this beat that I'm going to play over it.' Instead, I might play a little melody on the bongos first and let the music breathe a little bit before I pick up the sticks. Hand drumming helps me be more sensitive to what the other players are handing me."

Rusted Root percussionist Jim DiSpirito also feels that hand percussion gives him a different perspective. "It opened up a new and different world of rhythmic concepts from the ones I had grown up with playing drumset," he says. "Being a drumset player, you get very conditioned to certain phrasing aspects and combinations of sounds, and you tend to fall back on those. Once you get into the world of hand percussion, you become aware of different types of phrasings, especially if you become involved with instruments such as tabla, which have the whole Indian tradition behind them.

"You also become more aware of sound. With hand drums, you are always making decisions about which instruments to use for a specific song—this drum is a little too low, the goatskin one is more resonant, and so on. When you go back to drumset, you start to view it more as a multiple percussion outfit and are better able to explore the variety of sounds available to you."

Even Terry Bozzio, whose gargantuan drumset would seem to have no shortage of sounds, has found this to be true. "I've always been amazed at how the hand drum masters can get ten different sounds out of one little frame drum, as opposed to my whipping around ten tom-toms," he says. "It's that contrast between the many on one, and the one on many.

"A hand drum makes you focus on rhythm, because you're not dealing with hands and feet and coordination and all these different instruments. That focus results in an incredible concentration of energy. There's a law of compensation in music that deals with the relationship between melody, harmony, and rhythm. Certain passages or pieces of music have an emphasis on one of these areas and a relative de-emphasis on the other two. A good example is the ending of Stravinsky's *Rite Of Spring,* which uses just two or three notes. The rhythm is the thing that is so exciting.

"There are times that I feel my melodic playing is starting to sound corny, so at that point I'll lay off thinking melodically and focus on one or two drums. I put the emphasis on rhythm and go for all the variations of sound I can get, such as the rimshot or open sound, or the little subtleties I can get by using, say, doubles instead of single strokes. That's a sure-fire way to bring up the energy if things start to sound a little sappy from the melodic angle."

For Tommy Brunjes, who has worked with P.M. Dawn and the Murmurs, learning how to combine the different sounds of a single hand drum into a coherent whole completely changed his approach to the drumkit. "I now approach the drumset as a single instrument rather than as a set of drums," he explains. "In today's popular music, the drumset has become a combination of separate

components in terms of the way it is being used and recorded. We sit there and hit the bass drum for a half hour while they tweak the sound and EQ it, and then we go to the snare, and then to the hi-hat. When I hear the final mix, I don't really hear one instrument as much as I hear this dry, crisp hi-hat on the left side of the mix, this big punchy snare drum with reverb in the middle, and the bass drum is an almost inaudible low-end sound with some click on it.

"My original inspiration was John Bonham, whose sound is still marveled at by people these days. Part of it was the way he played, but I think a big part of it was also that his drumset was recorded as a single instrument—not as the sum of separate parts.

"When I play a hand drum, even though I'm getting an array of sounds, there is obviously a sense that this is a single instrument. So now when I play drumset, I don't have to think in terms of holding down the bottom with my bass drum, keeping time on the ride cymbal or hi-hat, and playing a backbeat with the snare drum. My means of combining sounds has expanded, as has my rhythmic sensibility."

Like many who have become involved with hand drums, Bozzio cites the intimacy of striking an instrument directly with the hands as opposed to using a stick. "There's that primitive feeling of skin on skin," he says. "It also gives you a nice sense of freedom. I often say that if the technological world ended tomorrow and there was no more plastic for drumheads and no metal for hardware and cymbals, I could have a lot of enjoyment just sitting under a tree playing a steam-bent piece of wood with a goatskin on it."

One challenge that many drumset players encounter with hand drums is learning to make the basic strokes. Drummers who are used to having collisions between their sticks and their drums quickly find that using a similar technique to strike a drum with the bare hand or a finger can be quite painful. Learning to strike a hand drum correctly can make one more aware of how to use sticks to pull the sound out of a drum by making it vibrate, as opposed to trying to beat the sound into it.

"I used to aim for the floor when I smacked a drum with a stick," says Neil Peart. "Through Freddie Gruber I learned that the drumhead is at the bottom of the stroke, not the middle of it. It's the same with hand drums. Your hands have to dance on the drums, not hit them. You have to work in orbits and waves instead of lines and angles. A good hand drummer isn't hurting himself, and neither is a good drumset player. A lot of drummers are proud of their bleeding hands and calluses. Now I know that's just the result of bad technique."

The reasons for getting involved with hand drums are as varied as the drummers who have done so. Some have incorporated hand percussion into their performance, while others simply play them for fun. "I was hungry for sounds beyond those of the traditional trapkit," says Perkins, whose setup includes a pair of bongos. Sometimes he plays them with sticks and incorporates them into his drumset patterns, while other times he plays them with his hands.

Tommy Brunjes often plays a frame drum or djembe with his hands while seated at his drumkit, maintaining bass drum and hi-hat patterns with his feet. "I'm still as much of a set player as I've ever been," he says. "But expanding into playing all these different drums is a big advantage for me. One thing I found when I started to do this is that there are bands who lean more towards the acoustic, 'unplugged' kind of sound who don't want a drumset per se. They want something different. Over the past three years I've played live in New York's 'downtown' scene with David Poe and the band Rasputina, which has three cello players. Having a wide range of hand drum and drumset technique, I was able to custom create what was necessary for both situations."

"A hand drum makes you focus on rhythm, because you're not dealing with hands and feet and coordination and all these different instruments. That focus results in an incredible concentration of energy."
—Terry Bozzio

The instruments have to fit the situation, though, as Peart found out. "About three years ago I really poured myself into hand drums," he says. "I actually had a plan to incorporate them into the backside of my setup, which has traditionally been electronics. I was going to have a complete percussion ensemble where my feet would do bass drum and snare drum with foot triggers and my hands would play congas, bongos, and djembe.

"But it turned out that none of Rush's songs required the use of hand drums," he admits. "As a responsible drummer, you have to go by what the song requires."

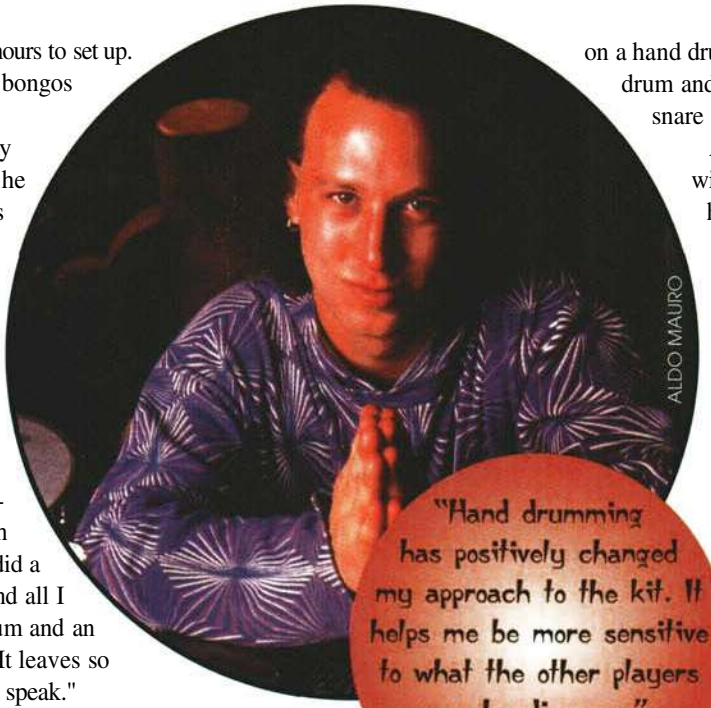
Both Peart and Bozzio say that they quickly realized that becoming a great hand drummer requires a lifetime of study and practice—just as being a great drumset player requires total dedication. So both consider hand drumming a hobby rather than a vocation.

"The first hand drum I was exposed to was a darbuka," says Peart. "Another drummer turned me on to it and said that you can sit on your lawn with that one single drum and get an incredible number of sounds. That seemed like fun."

For Bozzio, much of the appeal of hand drums had to do with their portability. While performing in France a few years back with the Lonely Bears, Bozzio went to dinner with a percussionist named Abed Azrie and the musicians in his group. After they ate, they all pulled out instruments and started playing, and Azrie was participating fully with a hand-held tar. Bozzio quickly saw the appeal of being able to play an instrument that didn't require a

truck to transport and several hours to set up.

Perkins' initial interest in bongos was sparked by friends who played acoustic guitar. "They were always ready to play," he says. "You can carry bongos around with you, and that's a cool way to use the musical energy that's inside you when you can't sit at your trapkit. When we travel, I can sit at the back of the bus and make music with these little drums. I also carry one of those shakers that look like an egg with me all the time. In fact, we did a little MTV acoustic thing, and all I brought was a little hand drum and an *Egg,* and it was pretty cool. It leaves so much room for the music to speak."



"Hand drumming has positively changed my approach to the kit. It helps me be more sensitive to what the other players are handing me."
—Stephen Perkins

Brunjes was drawn to hand drums while on the road with P.M. Dawn. "I picked up a frame drum because other than at soundcheck or rehearsal, there weren't many opportunities to sit down and play," he says. "I wanted something portable that I could carry with me and express myself on rhythmically without having to get to a drumkit. I started developing my own style, based on my drumset style. I was playing rock and funk grooves on a hand drum, using low, open tones for bass drum and slaps and higher pitched sounds for snare and hi-hat patterns."

As he became increasingly involved with hand percussion, Brunjes found that his expressiveness was enhanced. "I also play guitar," he explains, "and with guitar there are many ways to manipulate and subtly alter sounds by bending strings and getting harmonics. That was something I couldn't get across on drumset, but after relating to hand drums, I learned how to play more expressively by bending the head to change the pitch, muffling certain parts of the drum to bring out harmonics, and finding different sounds that weren't available to me previously."

Similarly, Perkins feels that his exposure to hand drumming has caused him to be aware of a wider range of dynamics. "I try to let the drums speak a little more instead of just beating the hell out of them," he says. "Dynamics aren't in the mix, man, they're in the musicians. Hand drums have brought a lot of musicality back to drumming."

Many drummers are drawn by the "community" aspect of hand drumming. Whereas drumset players are often "loners" in a band, hand drums tend to come from traditions in which an ensemble of drummers works together. Drum circles and ensembles require that individual egos be put aside for the benefit of the entire group. Rusted Root's drummer, Jim Donovan, found that such experiences in an African drum ensemble at the University of Pittsburgh were relevant to being a member of a band. "With African drumming, each part, even though it might be very simple, is really vital to the entire thing, and so you start to think about the whole piece instead of just your own part," he says. "That was really important for me working in a band situation, because it helped me realize that you don't have to play a lot to make it good."

Peart had a similar experience when he traveled to West Africa and had the opportunity to play in a traditional four-drum ensemble. "It's a completely different mindset because in those ensembles, you have to become one limb of a unit," he explains. "I found it frustrating coming from a western drumset point of view of hogging all the voices to sitting down among four drummers and playing a drum that simply went 'thud.' With this particular drum, you couldn't do a rimshot, and you couldn't cup your hand to get any resonance. But in the traditional ensemble, there is a place for that voice, just as there is a place with the drumset for the thud of the bass drum or the chick of the hi-hat.

"For hundreds of years, the tradition has been for someone to be perfectly content to be the thud player in that ensemble. I took that as kind of a metaphor for western ambition. We would never be satisfied to be just the thud."

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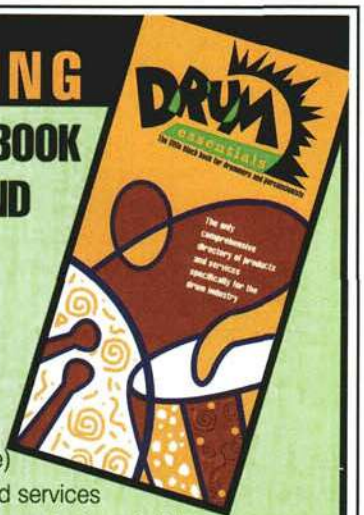

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TRANSFERRING THE CHOPS

Hand Drumming Techniques For Stick Drummers

by John Bergamo
photos by Alex Solca,

Okay, you've already got your hands full playing drumset, so why get into hand drumming? Well, you might want to try thinking of hand drumming as cross-training for body and mind, in the same way today's athletes use various physical and mental training techniques to improve their specialty. Simply put, hand drumming can broaden your musical universe.

It's not unusual: Drummers often get into other aspects of percussion to expand their playing possibilities. College-level music programs generally require drummers to study other instruments such as timpani and mallets. And recent programs have appeared that include the drumming of India, Indonesia, Brazil, Africa, and Afro-America. In all these traditions, playing with the hands is a large part (if not all) of the technical vocabulary.

Stick drummers who have moved into hand drumming usually find that their awareness of their hands holding the sticks is enhanced. Some drummers have said that they *feel* the drum through the stick in a different way, as if they're more "in touch" with the drum.

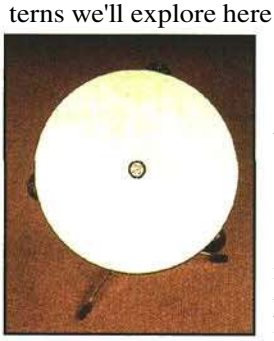
The point of this article is to show you that what you do with sticks is not all that different from what hand drummers do: A lot of what you already know can be translated to hand drums. With the basic techniques we'll cover, you will be able to get started on hand drums.

The ghatam, a South Indian clay pot, played with fingering patterns that are similar to "stick drumming" rudiments

Indian Roots

Over the centuries hand drumming has evolved into highly sophisticated traditions. The drumming of India is an excellent example. All of the many types of hand drums played in India share the concept of dividing the hand into different finger combinations. That concept is combined with the use of different striking areas and of open/closed (stopped) sounds, all of which creates a variety of tone colors.

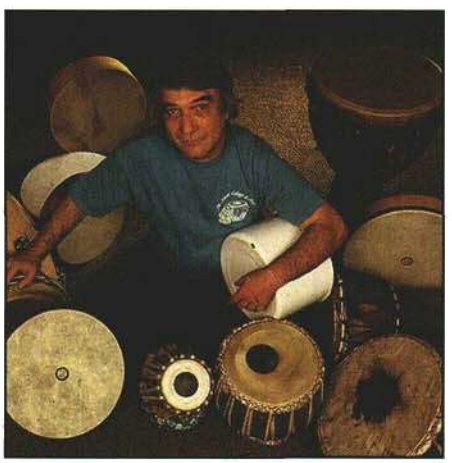
The basics of all of the fingering patterns we'll explore here are the same as those of stick drumming: singles and doubles. The fingering patterns of the ghatam, a clay pot that is a traditional percussion instrument of Carnatic (or South Indian) music, will be the basis of most of our fingerings. Although the ghatam is not technically a drum, the fingering patterns are more akin to "our" concept of doing most things with both hands.



A frame drum, mounted on a stand

Basic Strokes And Combinations

For the following exercises, any hand drum that can be played with your hands free—without holding or supporting the drum—will do. Djembes are abundant these days, as are frame drums and the ever-popular congas.



The author, surrounded by a few of his friends

If you have a djembe or conga, sit on a drum stool or chair and hold the drum between your legs, with the bottom of the drum resting on the floor and tilted slightly away from you. If

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you have a frame drum, hold it between your knees, angling the head toward your shoulders. If you have a 14" to 16" frame drum you can try

A frame drum held in the playing position between the legs

using a snare stand with some foam rubber or cloth around the claws to cushion the drum. (You can also cut notches in soft rubber balls and cap the ends of your stand claws with them, then cradle the drum in the basket.)

All drums have three general playing areas: a rim or edge where the head touches the shell; a "sweet spot" where the normal or natural tone is produced; and a center. As with your kit drums, striking near the rim gives a thin tone, while most playing is concentrated on the sweet spot. In hand drumming, the center and sweet spot can be used for open and closed sounds. We'll begin with the sweet spot.

A djembe held in a seated playing position

Position your hand over the drum as though you were holding a stick. Keep the palm down (even if you play thumbs up) and make the motion of striking the drum as if there's a stick in your hand. Slowly, while repeating the motion, release your "grip," and with the same basic arm motion allow the fingers (index, middle, ring, and little) to strike the drum. Your hand should strike the head so the rim touches your palm under the point where the fingers are connected; this is the sweet spot. Play this stroke, which we will identify as number "4" (referring to the four fingers used), and let the fingers bounce off the head, allowing the sound to resonate.

Playing the "sweet spot" with a "4" stroke (all four fingers)

The "sweet spot" played with a "1" stroke (index finger only)

The "3" stroke, involving the middle, ring, and little fingers

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The four fingers should strike at the same time but should not be held together, as this will create tension. The delivery of the fingers should have the same loose feeling, especially in the wrist, as in your stick drumming. Try this with your other hand and don't be too concerned with the sound. Keeping your arm/wrist/hand relaxed is most important. Play this stroke pattern: 4,4, 4, 4/R, L, R, L, etc. You now have a hand drum single-stroke roll.

Next play R, L, R, L with only your index fingers. Don't fold the other fingers under; let them move with the index finger to give more weight to the stroke. We'll refer to this stroke as "1." Play 1,1,1,1/R, L, R, L. This will produce another, thinner-toned single-stroke roll, especially when played near the rim.

The hand can now be divided into index finger (1) as one beater, which you just played, and the middle, ring, and little fingers together, which we'll refer to as "3." Try playing a 3 stroke alone. Try this with both hands. Now alternate hands, like this: 3, 3,1,1/R, L, R, L, etc. This fingering pattern is also a single-stroke roll, except the alternate fingering of 3, 3, 1, 1 creates another timbre. When using this combination, 3 is striking while 1 is held up ready to strike, and vice versa.

A hand drum equivalent of the *double-stroke* roll could be 3, 1, 3, 1/R, R, L, L. A paradiddle could be: 3, 3, 3,1, 3, 3, 3,1/R, L, R, R, L, R, L, L. When playing the doubles at fast speeds, it's the same concept as with sticks, two finger/hand sounds for one arm stroke.

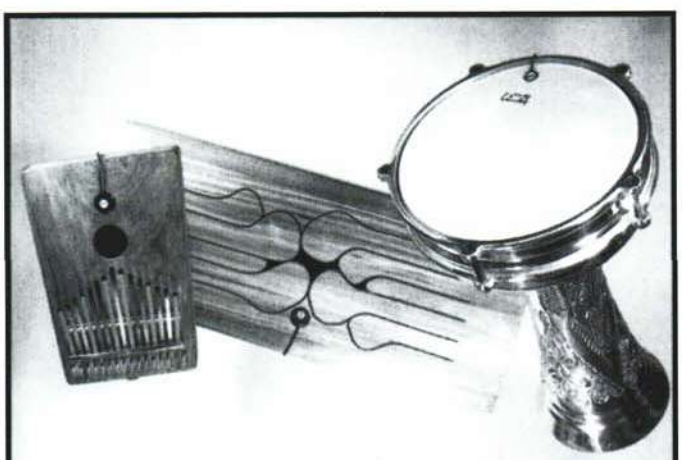
Close Call

Besides offering built-in beaters with different tones, hand drumming adds variety with the use of closed sounds or stopped tones. These strokes are begun the same way as open strokes; the hand is simply left on the head, thus creating a closed tone without a ring.

A common mistake made in playing closed sounds is to press the fingers into the head. This creates tension in the forearm and on the back of the hand. Allow the fingers to rest lightly on the head after contact, without using additional pressure.

Closed sounds work best on the sweet spot and center of the head. It is virtually impossible to play a completely closed sound on the rim except if the head is muffled with the other hand. However, some very staccato tones can be produced, especially when using the index finger (1) on the rim while muffling with the other hand. You may find that strokes 3 and 4 played as closed strokes are virtually the same as the way some congeros play the slap tone.

Playing a closed stroke on a frame drum, using the second hand to muffle the sound



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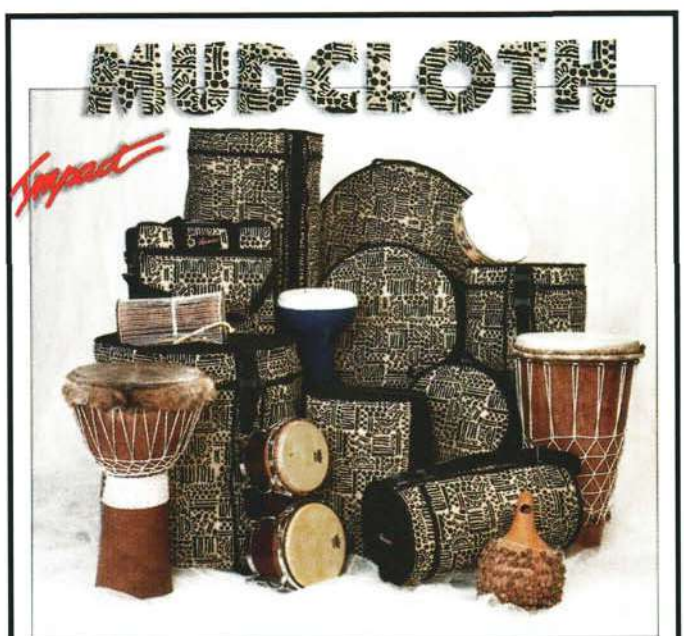

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Try using the previous fingerings with closed sounds, exploring the different qualities of sound produced by using different combinations of open and closed tones.

All Thumbs

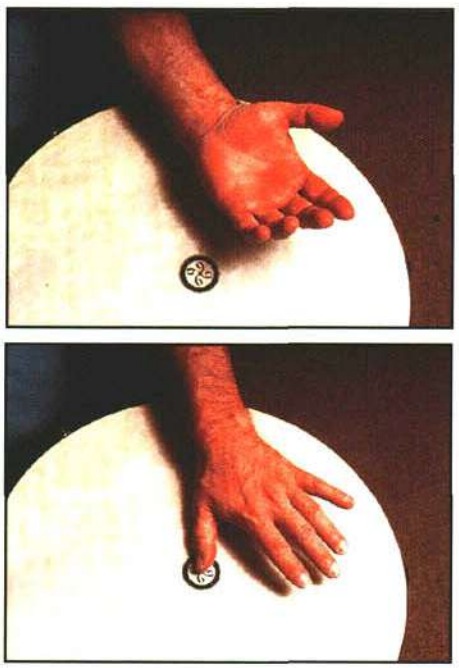
There's another beater to add to your sound possibilities—the thumb. For players who hold their sticks using the traditional grip, playing with the thumbs will seem natural. In this case hold your left hand (for right-handed players) as though you are holding a stick. Extend the fingers and thumb. Then turn the forearm so the thumb is thrown into the head. Again, stay loose, just like with your stick drumming. You'll eventually want to make this stroke with less rotation, with the thumbs starting upright.

A closed stroke on a conga played—and simultaneously muffled—with one hand

Try the thumb stroke (which we'll refer to as "T") with the right hand, then the left. Next, try alternating back and forth: T, T, T, T/R, L, R, L. You've found yet another single-stroke roll.

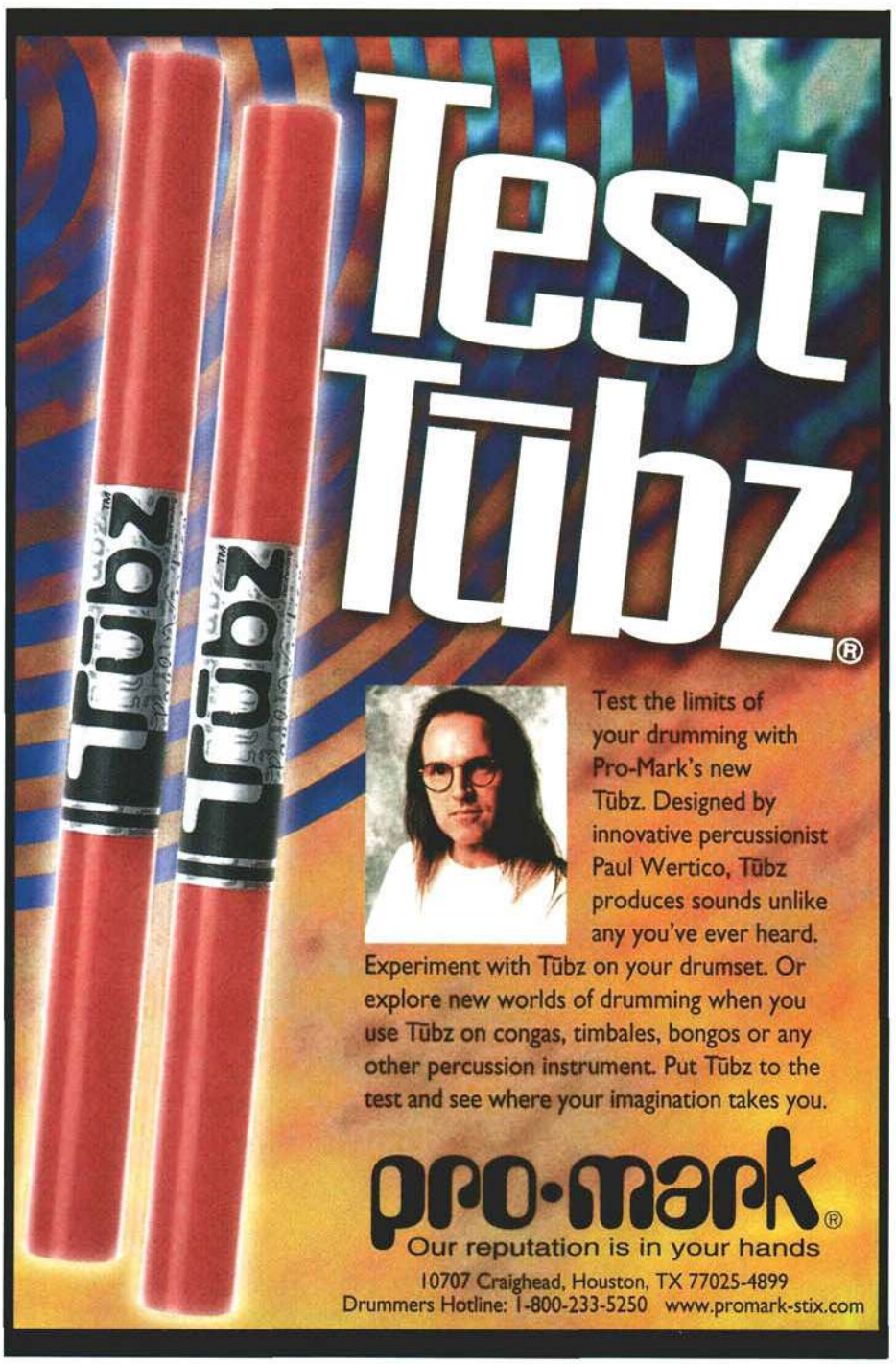
"Sticking" Patterns

Let's combine some of the strokes we've covered. Try patterns like T, T, 3, 3, 1, 1/R, L, R, L, R, L and T, T, 3, 3, 1, 1, 3, 3/R, L, R, L, R, L, R, L. Again, they are both simple single-stroke roll combinations.



The "thumb" stroke, before (top) and after

Sticking patterns can have rhythmic capacities, as a paradiddle is a rhythm or phrase of four (RLRR, LRLL), or a phrase of three being RLL, RLL. The same idea is present in fingering patterns. If we play strokes 3, 1, 3 as R, R, L and strokes 3, 3 as R, L, we have a pattern for three and a pattern for two, which is all we need to create any rhythm or meter. A stroke combination of 3, 1, 3, 3, 1, 3 has a natural "three" feeling, and 3, 3/R, L has a natural "two" feeling.



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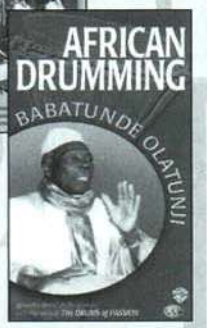

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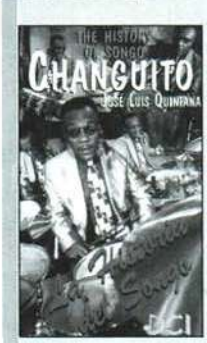

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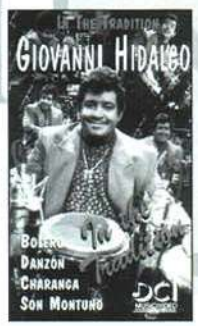

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Using various combinations of these two basic fingerings will create interesting patterns, especially when you move your strokes around the drum and use open and closed sounds.

Sing It

Along with fingering and/or sticking patterns, many cultures use vocal sounds to learn rhythms. In India, the use of mnemonic syllables dictates not only rhythm but also the very specific sounds to be played.

In both styles of Indian classical music, Northern/Hindustani and Southern/Carnatic, drummers and other instrumentalists use a common language distinctive to each style to communicate rhythmic ideas. This use of syllables to express rhythm is related to our use of 1, e, &, a and 1-trip-let, 2-trip-let.

In borrowing from East Indian drumming, I have found it very useful to use syllables instead of numbers. This will help your hand and stick drumming. You may already have your own favorite words to use for particular rhythms. For a phrase of two I say "Ta Ki" (pronounced "tah kee") and for three I use "Ta Ki Te" ("tah kee tay").

This concept is particularly helpful in learning odd meters. Instead of "One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven," for instance, just say Ta Ki, Ta Ki, Ta Ki Te. To express a more common rhythm (one of the most common found throughout the world), try "Ta Ki Te, Ta Ki Te, Ta Ki" (123, 123, 12). These are by no means all of the syllables used in India, but they *are* enough to express a two and a three, the building blocks of all rhythms.

Using rhythmic syllables is an excellent way to open the door to understanding odd-number rhythms, whether as a meter or as rhythmic subdivisions. It also reinforces the use of more common rhythms.

Hands & Sticks: The Perfect Combo

Why is hand drumming so important in some cultures, while sticks are used predominantly in ours? Even historians can only imagine how the first drum came to be. Most likely an ancient relative, having consumed the flesh of some beast, put the skin on a rack and, when it dried, tapped it with a finger, giving birth to the first frame drum. Perhaps the next discovery was striking the skin with a spear, arrow, or a bone left from dinner.

Whatever the distant beginnings, some cultures developed drumming with sticks almost exclusively; in others the use of the hands/fingers was emphasized. But by momentarily setting aside your sticks, you are not stepping back in time; rather you're discovering drumming that developed *in parallel* with stick drumming—and something that could enrich your musical life.

I hope your experience with hand drumming will be as positive as mine has been. It may lead you, as my explorations have done, into direct study of the hand drumming culture you enjoy most. In my journey from stick drumming to hand drums and back again, there have been musical rewards beyond my imagination—and I've met some of the most incredible people on the planet, visited some interesting places, heard some unbelievable music, and eaten some wonderfully tasty food—*all* because of my connection with hand drumming.

A recognized hand drumming expert, John Bergamo is a respected performer and educator who has recorded with Frank Zappa, Ali Akbar Khan, Shadowfax, Brent Lewis, and many others. He is a member of the Repercussion Unit, and teaches at the California Institute Of The Arts.

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THE HAND DRUMMER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

by Lauren Vogel Weiss

Drumset players used to think of "hand drumming" as someone playing a pair of bongos or a couple of congas. Not anymore! Today's hand drummers range from Brazilian percussionists playing authentic samba rhythms in popular bands to frame drummers leading drum circles comprised of all types of musicians (and non-musicians) joining together in the spiritual energy of drumming.

But how can a novice hand drummer learn from all the various people? Recordings, instructional books, and videos are a great place to start! Below is a list of some of today's more prominent hand drummers (noteworthy credits shown) and where they can be seen and heard.

Alex Acuna

(percussionist with Weather Report, U2, Al Jarreau, Manhattan Transfer, and Wayne Shorter)
Weather Report's *Black Market* (CD)
Weather Report's *Heavy Weather (CD)*
Alex Acuna And The Unknowns (solo CD)
Drums + Percussion (video)—Warner Bros.
South American, Caribbean, African and American Jazz (video)—Warner Bros.

Robin Adnan Anders

Voices of the Doumbek (video)—Warner Bros.

John Bergamo

On The Edge (CD)—CMP
The Art And Joy Of Hand Drumming (video)—Warner Bros.
Finding Your Way With Hand Drums (video)—Warner Bros.

Jorgre Bermudez

Conga Drumming: "A Beginner's Video Guide" (video)—Dancing Hands Music

Ignacio Berroa

(long-time drummer/percussionist with Dizzy Gillespie, among others)
Mastering The Art Of Afro-Cuban Drumming (video)—Warner Bros.

Glen Garuba

(percussionist with Bruce Springsteen, Sheryl Crow, Bruce Hornsby, and Arturo Sandoval)
Afro-Cuban Drumming (book & CD)—Hal Leonard

Pandif Swapan Chaudhuri

(one of the world's greatest tabla players)
The Soul Of Tabla (CD)—Interworld

Frank Colon

(percussionist with the Manhattan Transfer, Wayne Shorter, and Ray Anderson's Alligatory Band)
The Manhattan Transfer's *Brasil* (CD)—Atlantic, and *Offbeat Of Avenues* (CD)—Columbia
Wayne Shorter's *Joyrider* (recording)
Airto Moreira's *The Other Side Of This* (CD)—Rykodisc, and *Aqui Se Puede* (CD) Mickey Hart's *Planet Drum* (CD)—Rykodisc

Luis Conte

(percussionist with Phil Collins, Madonna, and Jackson Browne, and can be heard on many major motion picture soundtracks)
The Studio Percussionist (video)—LP Music Group

David R. Courtney

Fundamentals Of Tabla (book)—Sur Sangeet Services

Randy Crafton

Inner Rhythms (CD)—The Relaxation Company
Duologue (CD)—Lyrichord Discs
Songs Of The Six Celtic Nations (CD)—Lyrichord Discs
Bridges (CD)—Interworld
Volume 1: Getting Started With Frame Drums (booklet and cassette)—Crafton Percussion Works
Volume 2: Snapping Techniques For Frame Drums (booklet and cassette)—Crafton Percussion Works
Volume 3: Kitataka Strokes For Frame Drums (booklet and cassette)—Crafton Percussion Works
Volume 4: Duet For Frame Drums (Music Minus One)—Crafton Percussion Works

Esther A. Dagan

Drums—The Heartbeat Of Africa (book)—Galeire Amrad African Art Publications

Brad Dutz

Have Fun Playing Hand Drums: The Bongo Drums (video)—Warner Bros.
Have Fun Playing Hand Drums: Conga-Style Drums (video)—Warner Bros.
Have Fun Playing Hand Drums: Djembe-Style Drums (video)—Warner Bros.

Alan Dworsky and Betsy Sansby

Conga Drumming: A Beginner's Guide To Playing With Time (book and CD or cassette)—Dancing Hands Music

Sheila E

(studio great with hundreds of record credits, including Quincy Jones, Prince, Narada Michael Walden, Lionel Richie, Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, and Santana)

Pete Escovedo, Sr.

(percussionist/composer/arranger and founding member of Santana, Caldera, and the Peter Escovedo Orchestra)

Peter Michael Escovedo

(percussionist with Mariah Carey, George Michael, Lionel Richie, Stevie Nicks, Marvin Gaye, and Huey Lewis)

Escovedo Family

Afro-Cuban Percussion Clinic [from PASIC '94 in Atlanta] (video)—Warner Bros.
Full Concert Video [from PASIC '94 in Atlanta] (video)—Warner Bros.

Bob Evans

Authentic Bongo Rhythms (book)—Warner Bros.
Authentic Conga Rhythms (book)—Warner Bros.

Ricardo Gallardo

Traditional And Contemporary Mexican Percussion Instruments [from PASIC '94 in Atlanta] (video)—Warner Bros.

Richie "Gajate" Garcia

(percussionist with Diana Ross, Art Garfunkel, Hiroshima, and John Denver)
Adventures In Rhythm, Close-Up On Congas (video)—LP Music Group
Adventures In Rhythm, Close-Up On Bongos And Timbales (video)—LP Music Group

Robert S, Gottlieb

Solo Tabla Drumming Of North India (book and cassette)—Steve Weiss Music

Jim Greiner

Community Drumming For Health And Happiness (video)—LP Music Group

Mickey Hart

(percussionist for the Grateful Dead)
Drumming At The Edge Of Magic by Mickey Hart and Jay Stevens (book and CD)—Harper Collins
Planet Drum by Mickey Hart and Fredric Lieberman (book)—Harper Collins

Giovanni Hidalgo

(one of the world's greatest conga players, who has performed with Art Blakey, Ruben Blades, Jaco Pastorius, Tito Puente, Carlos Santana, George Benson, Paquito D'Rivera, Paul Simon, and Bata Cumbele; currently teaches percussion at the Berklee College of Music in Boston)
Worldwide (CD with his own group)—Tropijazz Records
Conga Virtuoso (video)—Warner Bros.
Conga Masters: Changuito & Giovanni Duets (video)—Warner Bros.

Arthur Hull

(nationally renowned drum circle facilitator and educator at the University of Santa Cruz)
Guide To Endrummingment (video)—Warner Bros.
Heartbeat with Gabriel Roth & the Mirrors (CD)
New World Dance with African Rain & Babatunde Olatunji (CD)
Everything's Changing In The Global Village with Worlds Collide (CD)
Drum Culture with Small Village Ensemble (CD)

Zakir Hussain

(master tabla player, taught by his father, Alla Rakha)
Making Music (with John McLaughlin and Jan Garbarek) (CD)—ECM
Super Percussion Of India (CD)—World Music Library
Zakir Hussain & The Rhythm Experience (CD)—Moment!

Kalani

(percussionist with Yanni, Chante Moore, and Vic Damone)
Insights (CD)—Interworld
Pangea (CD)—Interworld
African Beats (video)—Warner Bros.
Yanni's *Live At The Acropolis* (CD and video)—Private Music
Speaking Drum Book (book)

Jerry Leake

Volume II Of Series A.I.M. Indian Influence—Tabla Perspectives (book)—Rhombus Publishing

Humberto Morales and Henry Adler

Latin-American Rhythm Instruments (book)—Warner Bros.

Airto Moreira

Brazilian Percussion With Airto Moreira (video)—DCI Music/CPP Media
Listen And Play (video)—DCI Music/CPP Media
Rhythms And Colors (video)—DCI Music/CPP Media
Highlights From Rhythms And Colors/Listen And Play (video)—DCI Music/CPP Media

Valerie Naranjo and Barry Olsen

Dagari Music Of Ghana [from PASIC '94 in Atlanta] (video)—Warner Bros.

Babatunde Olafunji

(master African drummer)
African Drumming (video)—Warner Bros.

Armando Peraza

(percussionist with Santana)

Alla Rakha

(this century's preeminent tabla player who worked extensively with Ravi Shankar)
Tabla Duet (with Zakir Hussain)

(CD)—Moment!
Tabla Duet (with Zakir Hussain) (CD)—Chandra Dhara
Ustad Amjad AH Khan & Zakir Hussain (CD)—Moment!

Layne Redmond

(master drummer who leads a women's drumming ensemble called "The Mob of Angels")
Ritual Drumming (video)—Warner Bros.
Since The Beginning (CD)—Interworld

Rauf Rekow and Karl Perazzo

(percussionists with Santana)
From Afro-Cuban To Rock (video)—LP Music Group

Bobby Sanabria

Getting Started On Congas: Conga Basics (video)—Warner Bros./DCI
Getting Started On Congas: Technique For One And Two Drums (video)—Warner Bros./DCI
Getting Started On Congas: Technique For Two And Three Drums (video)—Warner Bros./DCI

Patricia Sandler

The Mbira And The Music Of The Shona People Of Zimbabwe [from PASIC '94 in Atlanta] (video)—Warner Bros.

Trichy Sankaran

(virtuoso on the mrdangam)
Rhythmic Principles And Practice Of South Indian Drumming (book)—Trichy Sankaran (publisher), 31 Manadan Drive, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada M2M 1W8
Mrdangam And Kanjira Clinic [from PASIC '94 in Atlanta] (video)—Warner Bros.

Jerry Steinholtz

The Essence Of Playing Congas (video)—Warner Bros.

Birger Sulsbruck

Latin-American Percussion (video)—Warner Bros.

Tabourt

Tambourine! The Happy Sound (book)—The Tactus Press

Carlos "Patato" Valdez

(forty-year veteran of Latin music) with **Tito Puente** (legendary timbale virtuoso and bandleader)
The Latin Percussion Jazz Ensemble (LPJE): Live At Montreux (video)—LP Music Group

Glen Velez

(master drummer credited with bringing frame drums to the forefront of contemporary music; has performed with the Paul Winter Consort, Suzanne Vega, Marc Cohen, and others)
Doctrine Of Signatures (recording)—CMP
The Fantastic World Of Frame Drums (video)—Warner Bros.

Miscellaneous

Conga Drumming (book with CD)—LP Music Group
Drum Damba: Talking Drum Lessons (book)—LP Music Group
Drum Gahu (book that explores systematic method for African percussion)—LP Music Group
Interworld Hand Drumming Sampler (video)—Warner Bros.
The Big Bang (3-CD set)—Ellipsis Arts (This set includes drum and percussion from around the world, including performances by Mickey Hart's Planet Drum group, Brazilian percussion by Airto, Glen Velez on Egyptian riq, tabla by Zakir Hussain, African master drummer Babatunde Olatunji, Japanese taiko drumming, Celtic bodhran, Native American pow-wow drumming, and more.)
The Music Of The Santari (Bata drums) (book)—LP Music Group
Understanding Latin Rhythms (audio cassette with book)—LP Music Group

Considering that hand drumming is enjoying an explosive growth in the current musical environment, this listing cannot be totally comprehensive. Please use it as a starting point to explore more "world percussion," and enjoy hand drumming!

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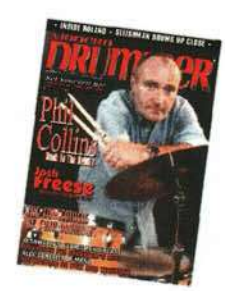

Peter Erskine belongs to the Percussive Arts Society

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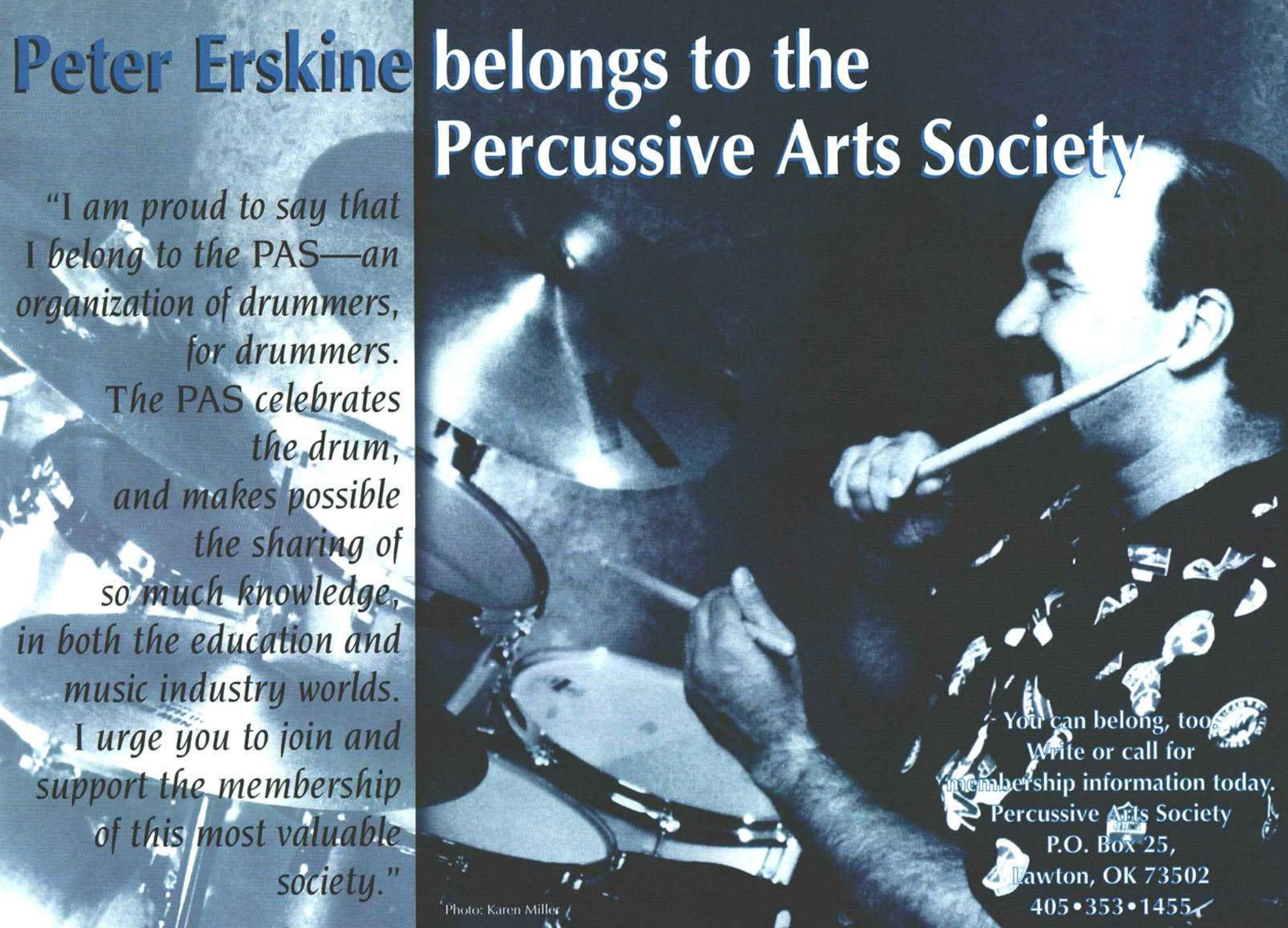

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WORLD PERCUSSION

New Products Guide

Steve Wright of The Wright Hand Drum Co. says, "World percussion and hand drumming influences are popping up in different musical styles everywhere, from jazz and rock to Celtic and orchestral, and even on TV ads for potato chips. They seem to be in the collective consciousness." Major manufacturers and solo artisans are heeding the call and tapping into that consciousness with an almost unimaginable variety of ways to broaden your musical palette. Following is a list of manufacturers and a sampling of the vast selection of ethnic hand drums they offer.

Afro Percussion's hand drums include *Afro Fiberwood* djembes and the *Afro Elite* congas and bongos shown.

American Percussion Instruments' Ken Lovelett has created and patented the *Orthogonal Lap Drum,* with goatskin heads positioned at right angles on a glazed and hand-painted clay drum with a tone-control hole. Available in right- and left-hand models, with two or three heads, the drums can be played by hand—with or without metal thumb rings—or with a bamboo brush.

Some of **Caribbean Rhythms, Inc.'s** drums, including *Jungle Congas,* begin as recycled rum barrels—evidenced by the char marks on their shells. The company's wide array of authentic percussion includes Dominican tiriandas (a tambourine/maraca hybrid), cascada (sea pods that produce a waterfall sound), canoita (Dominican boat-shaped mahogany cloves), tamboras (used for authentic merengues), solid mahogany-shelled pleneras (pictured, used in Puerto Rican bomba and plena rhythms), and mahogany-sectioned Haitian batas.

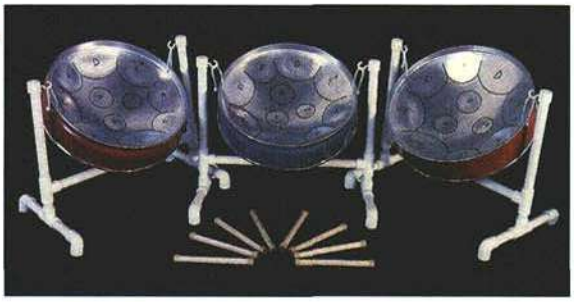
All One Tribe specializes in drums, beaters, drum bags, and accessories that are handmade by Native Americans. (Part of the company's profits are used to support Native American causes). Shown are their *Artbeat* drums with three different hand-printed head designs.

In addition to djembes, ashikos, bata, and cajon (box drums), **Clandou Rhythm** offers such unusual items as a clear acrylic 40x14 djun-djun, a "spider bass drum," (based on the traditional Ghanaian brekete, but with many more "snares" in a web pattern), and a djun-djun made from a 32-gallon oil can. Pictured is a full trapset of bass and snare drum shells decorated with hand-painted leather, fabric, and African wax cloth. Clandou also custom-finishes and repairs hand drums, and sells a variety of goat, calf, and steerskin heads.

For $9.95, **Equinox Productions** provides complete, step-by-step instructions on how to make *Earth Tone Drums* from free, recycled materials found around the home. (This drum's "shell" is made of a coffee can, and its head is made of paper treated with water and white glue.)

Everyone's Drumming offers djembes, ashikos, and djun-djuns in various sizes, plus talking drums, Ghanaian gogungui bells, and goat and calfskin heads, as well as hand drumming accessories, CDs, and tapes. All of their drums are hand-tooled from local (Vermont) pine, cherry, maple, oak, and black walnut,

Luanda Ellison Musical Instruments frequently electrify observers—as Ms. Ellison herself has electrified her tunable, exquisitely carved mbiras. Electric models, such as the lacewood *Thunder'bira* and wenge Ancestor shown, feature under-saddle piezo pickups that can be plugged in to any sound system. Electric and non-electric models alike have poplar bodies and are available with a wide variety of hardwood tops and custom options.



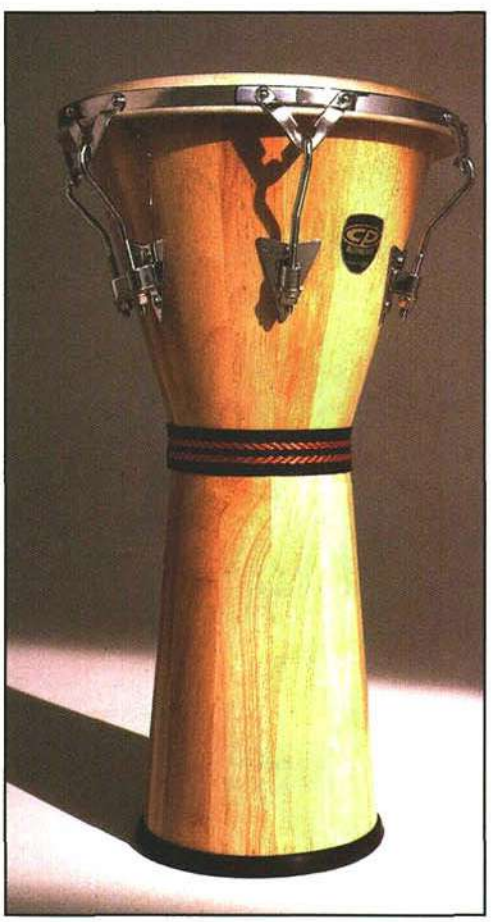
Michael Perkins tunes his **Fancy Pans** traditional Trinidadian-style pans with a very non-traditional—but much more accurate—oscilloscope. Pans are available in three different tunings, and each comes with an easy-to-assemble plastic tubular frame.

International Percussion Imports offers a line of ethnic percussion, specializing in Brazilian items like caxixi, ganza, berimbau, and tri-tone samba whistles, as well as the cuica de coco shown. IPI's emphasis is on *authenticity*—their instruments are made by hand in their countries of origin—and their profits are shared with the natives who make them.

Hardwood Percussion's Michael Thiele makes tongue drums in a wide variety of styles and tunings out of domestic and exotic non-endangered woods. Available through International Art & Sound.

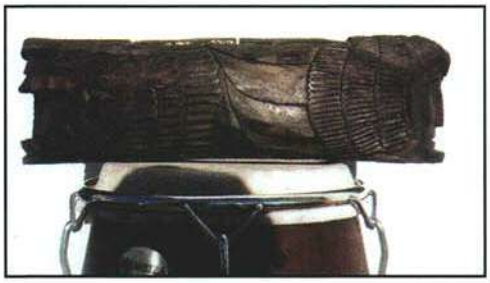
Peter Baldwin's **Large Community Drum Company,** whose slogan is "one earth, one people, one heartbeat," serves the growing drum circle movement. The drum shown features a 32x24, 1/8"-thick, 10-ply maple shell, a Maine moosehide(!) head, detachable, non-skid, rubber-bottomed legs, and a set of twelve hardwood beaters.

Headliner Percussion offers affordable mid-level congas, bongos, djembes, and accessories.



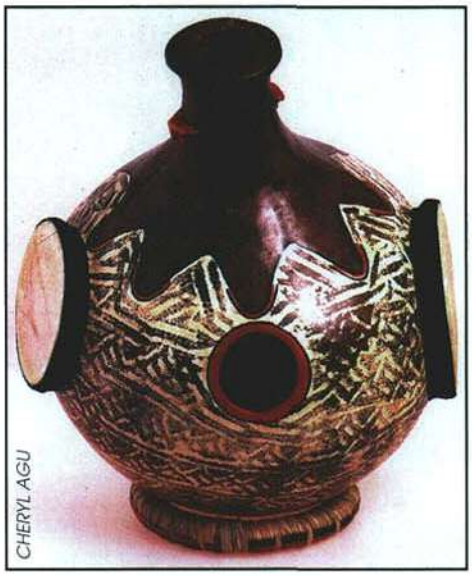
Renowned for its clever adaptation/modernization of traditional Latin percussion instruments such as the *Vibra-Slap* and *Jam Blocks,* ***IP*** **Music Group's** success was also built on top-of-the-line hand drums such as its *Giovanni* series congas made of North American premium ash. The company's *CP* line serves mid-level buyers with products like tunable bongos and the *Supreme* djembe (shown), made of Slam oak. Its *World Beat* line covers the entry-level market with items like small, medium, and large ashiko drums.

In addition to making colorful fabric-covered *Shakka Shakerz* in six sizes. **International Art & Sound** distributes products made by a number of smaller domestic percussion artisans, and offers a broad range of imported world percussion items. African and Afro-Cuban instruments include talking drums, djembes, shekeres, rattles, ago-go bells, and U.S.-made ashikos. IAS's import line also features Moroccan instruments such as tam-tams (double ceramic cowhide-headed "bongos"), bendirs (wood-shell hoop drums with removable strings that produce a buzzing sound on their goatskin head), and doumbeks (fired ceramic drums with heads made of cowhide or manta ray skin!).



Named for Cuba's Mambiza people, **Mambiza Percussion** imports drums made of woods from various regions in the Caribbean Basin. All components, including hardware, are handmade. In addition to the illustrated Aztec hue hue (hand-carved, two-tone tongue drum), Mambiza makes congas and asongas (each carved from a single tree trunk), ashikos, Congolese ngomas, and various hand percussion instruments. Many Mambiza drums are available with either traditionally strung or modern "lug-style" tuning.

Rhythm Fusion, Inc. offers a variety of drums, rattles, bells, whistles, and other instruments imported from around the world. Its hand drums include a doumbek made of cast aluminum and covered with vinyl sewn at the seams, and a darbuka (shown with carrying bag) made of copper and engraved and hand-painted in Turkey. Designed after traditional Middle Eastern drums, both have modern *Mylar* heads. Rhythm Fusion also offers *Woodshakes,* beechwood shakers in three sizes, and a beechwood version of a Brazilian ganza, traditionally made of tin.



Joe Chijindu Agu, a native of the African Igbo tribe—in whose language "udu" means pot and "igbah" means drum—founded **Rhythms** to produce instruments that both honor and refine traditional African designs. The *Udu-Igbah* adds a goatskin head to the traditional udu (also available), and the cross-tribal *Bata-Udu* (shown) combines elements of the Yoruba tribe's bata and the Igbo's udu. Additionally, Rhythms offers a wide variety of shakers, bells, slit drums, whistles, ceramic opi flutes, *Xylo-Pots* (three-note melodic wood bars over clay resonator drums), effects, and accessories.

Meinl has emerged as a major player in world percussion with several lines of congas (including these with the *Floatune* tuning system), djembes, and bongos, plus lesser-known items like the Dominican-originated tambora and a wide variety of hand percussion instruments and accessories.

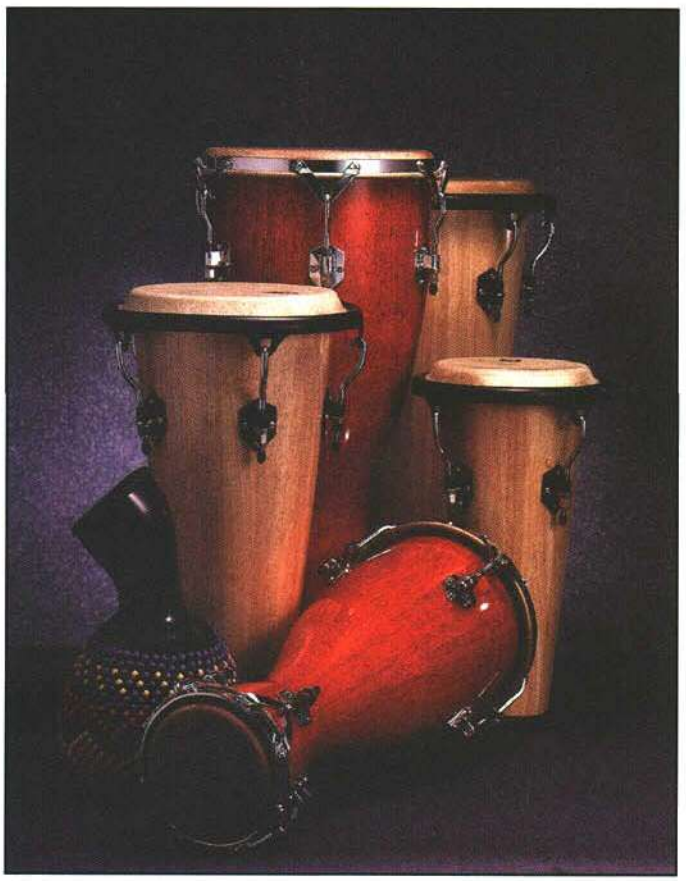
Best known for their drumheads, **Remo** has become a powerhouse in world percussion with modern adaptations of traditional hand drums from around the world, including Irish bodhrans, Brazilian surdos. East Indian kanjiras, North African tars and bendirs, and Native American *Buffalo Drums.* They also manufacture colorful "hybrid" pieces like their asonga and *Djembek,* as well as eye-catchers like their pre-tuned doumbek and standing ngoma (shown). Remo is intriguing drummers of tomorrow with its *Kids Percussion* line, which includes such items as its sweet-enough-to-beat *Lollipop Drum.*

Best known for hand percussion items like cowbells, cabasas, tambourines, etc., **Rhythm Tech** also makes bongos (shown) and congas.

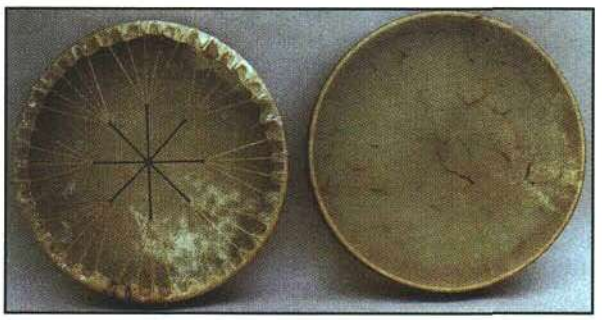
North Central Washington's **Smiling Woods** makes (and distributes through International Art & Sound) 8 1/2" ashikos in cedar and/or pine with black painted rings. Also available directly from Smiling Woods: 9", 10", and 11 1/2" ashikos with maple, birch, madrone, or other hardwood shells, and cloth wrapped rings. All drums feature goatskin heads and "Mali weave" low-stretch, black cord lacing. Smiling Woods also makes djun-djuns in a variety of hardwoods and softwoods.

Three Wishes Pottery drums feature goatskin heads and dense, resonant stoneware bodies. Crystals formed in the firing process give their high-fired glazed finishes additional depth and beauty. The center flange and flared end of the pictured *Tribe Of Kings Darbouka* facilitate use of a carrying strap.

Udu Drum offers a line of unglazed *Claytone* hand drums such as the *Gadam #1* (inspired by the East Indian ghatam), *Mbwata, Udongo II,* and *Tambuta* (shown), designed to fit on a snare drum stand. Udu Drum also makes *Softpaw* stands, and recently introduced a padded paddle/stick to help the trapset player "cross over" to its hand drums.



Toca offers a full range of professional hand percussion instruments, including congas and djembes with wood or fiberglass shells, and a two-headed rumba-timba solo drum. The company's *Players* line offers products for budget-conscious players, and its recently introduced *Synergy* series of world percussion includes items such as pre-tuned and tunable frame drums and "Circle Drums" with 8", 9", and 10" natural Asian oak shells.



World Drums' Paul S. Namkung makes hoop/frame drums with 10-ply maple hoops, bleached or natural cowhide heads, and waxed linen tuning sinews.

JOE JOLLEY

The Wright Hand Drum Company's Steve Wright combines a custom clay blend and special firing process with breathtaking artistic detail to make traditional and traditional-adapted hand drums. His *Guntas* (three sizes, 10" to 13") have a tone hole and both head and clay playing surfaces. *Ubangs* (four sizes, 11" to 19" tall) have two tone holes and flatter playing surfaces than traditional African clay pot drums. Pictured are two Indian ghatams, two-skinned clay shakers, and three *Claypans,* whose center and outer surfaces each produce a different pitch.

WHERE TO FIND THEM

Afro Percussion
Division of Pearl Corporation, 549 Metroplex Dr., Nashville, TN 37211, tel: (615) 833-4477, fax: (615) 833-6242

All One Tribe
P.O. Drawer N, Taos, NM 87571, (800)442-3786

American Percussion Instruments
P.O. Box 65, Mount Tremper, NY 12457, (914)688-7620

Caribbean Rhythms, Inc.
P.O. Box 15861, New Orleans, LA 70175, tel: (504) 895-1589, fax: (504) 822-8280

Clandou Rhythm
13 Coonradt Road, Cropseyville, NY 12052, (518)279-0684

Lucinda Ellison Musical Instruments
P.O. Box 1172, Lebanon, TN 37088, (615)449-6654

Equinox Productions
P.O. Box 1442, Thousand Oaks, CA 91358, (805)495-5118

Everyone's Drumming
P.O. Box 361, Christian Square, Putney, Vermont 05346, (800) 326-0726

Fancy Pans
Michael Perkins, P.O. Box 8393, Santa Cruz, CA 96061, (408) 336-3537 (between 9:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. PST)

Headliner Percussion
Postfach 14 08, 91404 Neustadt a.d. Aisch, Germany, tel: (0) 9161 1729, fax: (0) 9161 7543

International Art & Sound
Kerry "Shaker Man" Greene, 228 Commercial St. #300, Nevada City, CA 95959, (800) 555-9205, ext, 3013

International Percussion Imports
Keith Quarrels, P.O. Box 24017, Santa Barbara, CA 93121, (800) 649-5354 or (800)418-9793

Large Community Drum Co,
P.O. Box 221, Brooks, ME 04921, tel: (207) 722-3654, fax: (207) 722-3342

LP Music Group
160 Belmont Ave., Garfield, NJ 07026, tel: (201) 478-6903, fax: (201) 772-3568

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Rhythm Fusion, Inc.
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Three Wishes Pottery
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Toca
Kaman Music, 20 Old Windsor Road, Bloomfield, CT 06002, (800)647-2244, ext. 127

Udu, Inc.
Route 67, Box 126, Freehold, NY 12431, tel: (800) 838-3786, fax: (518) 634-2488

World Drums
P.O. Box 481, Chimayo, NM 87522, (505) 753-9253

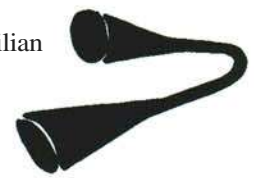
The Wright Hand Drum Co.
Stephen Wright, 15 Sycamore St., Hagerstown, MD 21740, (800) 990-HAND

DEFINING INSTRUMENTS

A World Percussion Glossary

Ashiko: This is a narrow, conical-shaped wood drum of African origin. It is rope-tensioned and usually has a goatskin head. It can also be made of synthetic materials and heads.

Afuche (a-fu-SHAY): Also known as a cabasa, the afuche is made of endless loops of plated steel ball chain. These loops surround a textured stainless-steel cylinder enclosed by smoothly finished flanges and joined with a handle. The cylinder is placed in the palm of the hand while the other hand twists the handle back and forth, causing the steel ball chain to rub against the textured cylinder, giving a rhythmic scraping effect.



Agogo Bell: Popular in Brazilian samba rhythms, agogo bells are made up of two attached conical bells, one lower in pitch than the other. They are played with a stick, and some can also be pressed together to create an additional rhythm when the bells meet.

Bata Drum: This hourglass-shaped drum is a traditional ceremonial drum used in the Santeria religion. It is a two-headed drum that tapers in diameter on one end. Bata drums come in three sizes: the lya (large), Omele or Itotole (medium), and Oncocolo (small). It is played with both hands, one on each side of the drum.

Berimbau (BEAR-im-bow): Traditionally found in Africa and Brazil, the berimbau consists of a bow made of wood, strung with steel wire, with a resonating gourd attached. It is played by striking the string with the stick while fretting the string with a coin and holding a shaker.

Bongos: These drums are of Cuban origin. In Latin music they are typically played sitting down, held between the knees. In pop settings they can be played on a stand. Traditionally they are made of wood but can also be made of fiberglass. The small head is known as the "macho" (male) and the large head is known as the "hembra" (female).

Cajon: The cajon (box) originates from the Andean Mountain region of South America. It is basically a wooden box and is played by sitting on top and rocking the bottom edge on and off the ground while hand drumming on the front. When the center is hit, it produces a broad, deep tone that is projected from a hole in the back. Some cajons have a loose top front panel, which when played on the top edges gives a high-pitch rattle that simulates a snare sound.

Cajun/Zydeco Rib Boards: These look like a corrugated vest of armor. Rubbing an object against the ridges gives a very rhythmic scraping sound much like a guiro.

Caxixi (ka-SHE-she) and **Ganza:** These are shakers that are similar in that they are woven and filled with loose beads (like maracas). The caxixi is bell-shaped, with a looped handle and a resilient bottom panel for accenting when shaken. The ganza is cylindrical and has a resilient top and bottom for a louder, high-pitched sound.

Castanets: Castanets are wooden clappers typically used by Spanish flamenco dancers. They are traditionally played in the hand, but can also be found attached to a handle or base for faster musical styles.

Clave Sticks: These are two short wooden sticks that are struck together to give a sharp crack. The African-style clave usually has one thicker stick with a scooped-out center

that allows for sound variation. They can be made of exotic woods or synthetic materials. Clave is a fundamental sound in most Latin music. The rhythm associated with these sticks is also known as the "clave," and is phrased in either a "3/2" or "2/3" rhythmic feel.

Conga Drums: With their origins in Africa and Cuba, conga drums are probably the most popular hand drums today. They come in a variety of woods as well as fiberglass, and are available in different sizes and contours. Congas are most commonly found in the following sizes: The superquinto or requinto is the smallest and is usually 9" in diameter; the quinto is 11"; the conga is 11 3/4"; and the tumba is 12 1/2".

Cuica (KWEE-ka): The cuica is a small, cylindrical, metal-friction drum. It is a staple of Brazilian Samba schools and is played by rubbing a wet cloth on a thin bamboo stick that is tied under the goatskin head. Pressure is applied to the head for pitch variation. This produces an almost vocal-like sound.

Darbuka: The darbuka is a goblet-shaped, single-headed drum. It is popular in Arab countries and is the cousin to the Turkish doumbek. The base is made of a solid piece of aluminum or nickel and can come engraved or with covering material.

Djembe (JEM-bay): The djembe is a goblet-shaped, single-headed drum of African origin. It is traditionally rope-tuned but can also be found with mechanical tuning. The head is made of thin goatskin. The djembe's shape produces crackling highs and surprisingly deep bass tones.

Frame Drums: There are many different origins of frame drums, from Celtic to Native American. They are similar in that they are all single-headed hand drums, like large tambourines without the jingles. The "bodhran," of Irish origin, is made with a traditional goatskin head, hardwood cross braces, and a laminated hardwood shell, and is played with a wooden beater.

Gourd Guiros: Traditional-style guiros are made of oblong hollow gourds with carved ridges in the front and two finger holes in the back. Some are open-ended on the top and some are completely enclosed. They are traditionally used in Latin music and are played with a wood or plastic stick to create a percussive scrape-like effect.

Junjun (also spelled djun djun): Traditionally played with djembes and ashiko drums, junjuns feature welded metal hoops, cherry-wood shells with an African cloth covering, rope tensioning, and goatskin heads.

Maracas: Maracas are pairs of shakers that originate from South America. They are traditionally made of hollow gourds containing loose seeds, but modern versions are typically made of wood, leather, or synthetic materials and filled with beads or other similar filling. They come in pairs with a high/low pitch variation.

Pueblo Drums: Pueblo drums are carved from a solid log, with rawhide skins on both sides and rawhide lacing in between. They feature a deep tone. (The deeper and wider the drum, the deeper the sound.)

Rainstick: Rainsticks are traditionally made of cactus, but can be made of different materials including plastic. There is a series of toothpick-like spines inside the cactus that criss cross throughout the length of the rainstick, causing the enclosed pebbles to bounce when the stick is rotated, giving off a rain-like sound effect.

Shekeres (SHE-ke-ray or CHE-ke-ray): Traditionally from Africa, shekeres are gourds covered with a woven beaded webbing, combining the three different elements of shaker, rattle, and drum. Shekeres are shaken, twisted, and hit on their bottom side to produce deep, resonant bass notes. Today they can be found made of durable synthetic materials.

Steel Drums: This instrument was originally fashioned from discarded fifty-five-gallon oil drums by the "panmen" of Trinidad in the mid-1940s. They have become popular throughout the Caribbean and in many other areas of the world, including the U.S. By varying the size of the notes on the top and the depth of the drum, the sounds range from a xylophone/piano combination to a resonance resembling violas and cellos. They are typically played with mallets.

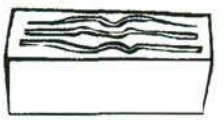
Tabla: This traditional ceremonial instrument from India consists of a pair of small drums played in a sitting position on the floor. The larger, round drum (bahya) is made of metal, and the taller, narrower drum (tabla) is made of wood. They sit on two round, donut-like bases covered in fabric.

Talking Drum: Originally from Africa, the talking drum is a two-headed drum with an hour-glass shape. The two heads are the same size and are strung by rope. The name comes from the fact that either head can produce a wide range of pitches, including high female sounds and low male sounds by squeezing the drum under the arm, while striking it with the hand or a curved stick.

Tambora: Originating from the Dominican Republic, the tambora is used in traditional fast-paced merengue music. It is a small, stocky-looking, two-headed drum that is traditionally rope-tuned, but can be found with modern tuning lugs. It is played with the hand on one side and a wood beater or stick on the other. Some also come with a wood or synthetic block attached to the shell so that the shell can be played and not damaged.

Thumb Piano: Also known as a kalimba or mbira, the thumb piano is of African origin. It consists of small, thin metal tongues of various lengths. When played with your thumbs, it creates a melodic, piano-like sound. The tongues may be mounted on a flat wood board, a hollow wood box, or a hollow gourd.

Timbales: Made of stainless-steel and brass, these drums have a lively sound. When struck on the side of the shell in a "cascara" rhythm, the timbale provides the driving force in salsa music. Although originally only played in Latin music, today timbales are incorporated in all areas of music.



Tongue Drums: Also known as African slit drums, tongue drums are wooden boxes with slits cut on top. The resultant "tongues" are randomly pitched and have a unique sound. This instrument is played with a mallet.

UDU Drums: The udu is a clay pot drum originating from Africa. ("Udu" means "pot.") It has a side hole that, when the base is hit, produces deep, haunting tones. Udu drums were initially used in religious and cultural ceremonies.

Waterphones: A Waterphone is a monolithic, stainless-steel and bronze tonal-friction instrument utilizing water in its resonator. Its sound has been compared to the haunting melodies of the humpback whale. Held by the neck or suspended by a cord, the waterphone can be played with a bow or mallets, or by hand.

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